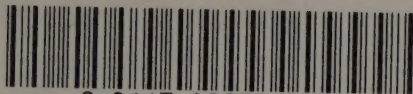


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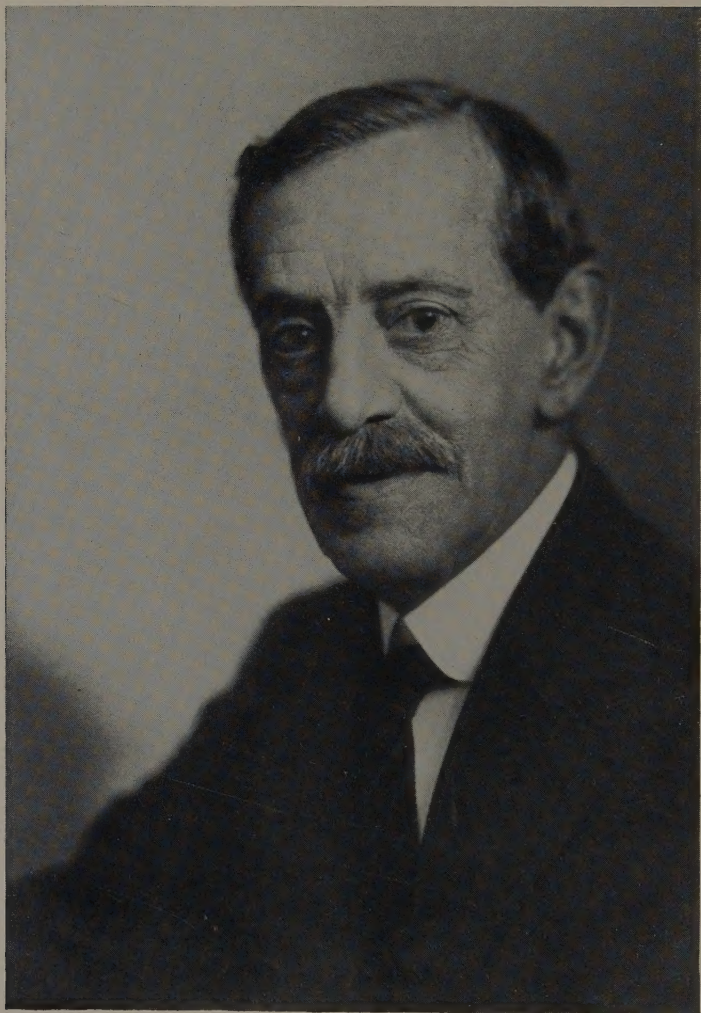
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FROM SWAN SONNENSCHN TO
GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD





WILLIAM SWAN STALLYBRASS
(formerly William Swan Sonnenschein) in 1927.

✓

From
Swan Sonnenschein
to
George Allen & Unwin Ltd

F. A. MUMBY
and
FRANCES H. S. STALLYBRASS

With an Introduction by
Dr. John Murray

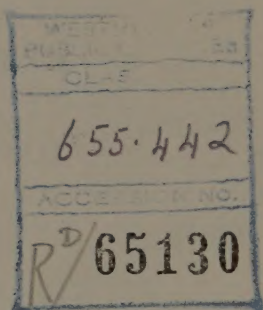


London
GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD
Ruskin House Museum Street

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1955

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BY UNWIN BROTHERS LIMITED

WOKING AND LONDON

INTRODUCTION

THIS little book originated in Messrs. George Allen & Unwin's commissioning the late F. A. Mumby some years ago to write a history of the predecessors of the firm. Mr. Mumby addressed himself first to Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein & Co. and more particularly and personally to William Swan Sonnenschein, the founder of the firm, and to the parts played by his successive associates, until he left his namesake firm to join Messrs. Routledge at Broadway House. The account of William Swan Sonnenschein has been amplified and enhanced by his daughter, Miss Frances H. S. Stallybrass—the family changed its name in 1917 to Stallybrass, the family name of Swan Sonnenschein's mother. The contributions of Mr. Mumby and Miss Stallybrass are here combined into one. The concluding section of the book deals with the recent stages of the history of Messrs. George Allen & Unwin in a more summary fashion. I hope that the accumulating material may one day be worthily elaborated.

It is a very intimate scene of interesting contacts, and hopes and fears, and speculative choices that the two authors illustrate. Intense vision and bold enterprise make the publisher, but only if tempered by caution and favoured with luck. Within these limits publishers, like the writers they serve, are of very diverse types. They succeed best, of course, when closely and well sustained by business and family ties: publishing, obviously, is team work. The authors have

drawn a telling picture of Swan Sonnenschein, a man of high standards and unsparing industry, restlessly creative, and yet, for all his incisive acuteness and intellectual integrity, gifted with wide and gentle sympathies. He had his 'scoops', and, again, he let good things slip through his fingers, as most men do. His ready welcome for all sorts of literary effort, all too ready and all too generous at times, probably conflicted somewhat with business advantage. He not only published but managed to combine writing and book-making with it, and his life's work in bibliography, *The Best Books*, made him well known all over the world. His contacts with J. M. Barrie, George Moore, and G. B. Shaw early in their careers show him in characteristic guise. In 1887 he wrote thus to Shaw: 'If you were to stick to novels or go in for plays, *which are even more suited to you*, in my opinion, you would . . .' etc. etc. . . . This perspicacious advice was not lost, presumably, on Shaw. The connection with Edward Carpenter, again, makes a tale worth telling.

The other main item in the confluence of elements that went to make the firm of George Allen & Unwin was provided by John Ruskin's challenging venture into publishing. His long battle with the booksellers and the novel and personal style of his publishing, while they belong to general literary history, enter piquantly into the present record. The strictly business relationship, dry, cautious and inhibited, was anathema to Ruskin, who vastly preferred a freer and warmer mode, as is exemplified in his dealings with his right-hand man George Allen and his family. To personalize and humanize even the most difficult and unpromising

matters was, of course, part of his creed, and a noble ambition. His overbrimming vitality permitted and stimulated in him a steady policy of which too few men are capable. His individualism shone out, a brilliant epitome, in certain respects, of an individualist age. Ruskin's compliments for Bernard Quaritch evoked a reply which shows the bookseller as a model of individualist practice, and more suited for general imitation than was Ruskin himself. The letter is too long for quotation *in extenso*, but it ends well: 'I have been forty years in London and have never been a day absent from duties; when I have been ill, I have gone to my work all the same.'

In due time the Allens moved to London, and in addition to their commitments with Ruskin's books they launched out in general publishing under the style of Messrs. George Allen & Sons. By 1893, seven years before Ruskin's death, they had acquired a considerable list of books by other writers. They published, for instance, Augustus Hare's *Story of My Life*, and *The Life of the Bee* and other books by Maeterlinck, and Hilaire Belloc's *Path to Rome*, and, in 1900, Gilbert Murray's first translation from the Greek, *Andromache: A Play in Three Acts*. George Allen, plagued towards the end of his life by pirated editions of Ruskin's books as the copyrights expired, died in 1907. His family, succeeding him, acquired the publishing branch of Messrs. Bemrose & Sons, the Derby printers, and in 1911 amalgamated with Swan Sonnenschein & Co. Ltd. under the name of George Allen & Co. Ltd. But the new firm (with which Mr. Swan Sonnenschein was no longer connected) got into finan-

cial difficulties, and had to submit in 1913 to a brief receivership, from which it was rescued by a new company under the leadership of Mr. Stanley Unwin, now Sir Stanley Unwin, just as Routledge's benefited by the advent of William Swan Sonnenschein. The new company, Messrs. George Allen & Unwin, was formed on the 4th of August, 1914, a birthday of apparent ill omen. That it stood its ground then, and has since risen to an outstanding position in contemporary publishing, has been due to Sir Stanley Unwin. By his personal and professional qualities he has served not only his own firm but English publishing in general, and his activities in the international field have brought him titular recognition: a British knighthood, an honorary Degree of LL.D from Aberdeen University, the *Palmes d'Officier de l'Académie Française*, the *Palm in Gold of the Crown of Belgium*, the *Order of the White Lion* from the Czechoslovak Government, the *Order of Orange Nassau* from Her Majesty Queen Juliana, and *Icelandic Knight of the Order of The Falcon*. His career illustrates the value of hereditary interest and specific preparation. Among the favouring influences were training under his publisher uncle T. Fisher Unwin, his excursion into bookselling at Leipzig, his knowledge of continental languages and literatures, all made fruitful by quick insight and alert action.

The last section of the book, as has been said above, is the least full. Sir Stanley Unwin is uniquely able to tell the full story that began on the 4th of August, 1914, a story that when told will make an indispensable chapter in the annals of British publishing. No side of

life and work better deserves to be chronicled than publishing—its variety, its ups and downs, triumphs and catastrophes, its kaleidoscopic quality. Now it marks time, and again lives in bursts of energy. It is dogged by doubts about the tastes of the public and their persistence, and about the talent and the stamina of writers. But on the whole hope rules perennial. A publisher may fall by the way, but publishing goes on. Absorptions and amalgamations screen off the ugly facts of failure: burdens and losses are taken over, and a merciful dispensation neutralizes disaster and death. The voracious public, the multitudinous 'readership', seldom ruminates on the risks those run who produce the books they read. This little book, I hope, may draw the veil aside.

JOHN MURRAY

August, 1954

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

WE cannot let this book go to press without an acknowledgement of the debt it owes to Dr. John Murray.

Mr. F. A. Mumby's text was written in 1936 when he was able to consult those who knew, and had worked with, Swan Sonnenschein, George Allen and others mentioned almost from the start. By the time it was completed, war was upon us and paper was a scarce commodity inequitably rationed. None could be spared for any publication not urgently wanted, and in any case it was originally thought that this material might form the opening chapters of a history of George Allen & Unwin. As time went on, however, it became clear that Allen & Unwin would need a volume to itself.

Miss Stallybrass's account of her father was written independently, and later. Dr. Murray welded the two together and revised the whole—tasks for which he was admirably equipped because of his friendship with Swan Stallybrass (the name Sonnenschein adopted in 1917) and with his family. As publishers we are particularly grateful to him, and we also wish to record our thanks to Miss P. M. Bradbury for preparing a freshly typed version of a heavily corrected, and in parts almost indecipherable, manuscript.

The work makes no claim to be anything but a matter-of-fact record of a small corner of publishing history.

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Swan Sonnenschein & Company

ALTHOUGH the house of Allen & Unwin came into being no longer ago than that fateful day, August 4, 1914, its foundations were laid in the seventies of the nineteenth century, when John Ruskin, on the one hand, started his Arcadian business in Kent, with George Allen, the engraver, as his publisher, and William Swan Sonnenschein, on the other, turned from medicine to publishing in the heart of London. Both ventures played their separate parts in the literary history of the next three decades before joining forces and becoming merged in the group now concentrated at Ruskin House. Their story, told here in full for the first time, together with some account of the other firms subsequently coming under the same control, has long been needed to fill a gap in the annals of English publishing.

William Swan Sonnenschein, known in later life, when he adopted his mother's maiden name, as William Swan Stallybrass, was born on May 5, 1855. His father, Adolf Sonnenschein, was a native of Moravia, Austria, who came to England in 1848 and was in due course naturalized. Opening a school in Highbury he numbered among his pupils not a few who made their mark in life. He wrote a number of textbooks and

other works which had a widespread influence in his adopted land. For many years he gave his services to the Working Men's College, collaborating in that zealous work with F. D. Maurice, Thomas Hughes, R. H. Hutton, and others, including John Ruskin, whose Utopian publishing experiment in later years was ultimately to become linked with his own son's business. Adolf Sonnenschein's services to education in this country were acknowledged in 1903, when the British Government conferred a pension upon him.

Like his elder brother, Professor Edward A. Sonnenschein, William Swan Sonnenschein was educated at University College School and University College, London. He was intended for the medical profession and in fact began his medical training, but the operating theatre and dissecting room proved more than his sensitive nature could endure.

Forsaking medicine, he found his true bent in the world of books. One of his father's personal friends was E. Sydney Williams, who, with Frederic Norgate, had founded the house of Williams & Norgate, publishers and book importers, at 14, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, in 1843. Through this friendship young Sonnenschein was apprenticed to the firm, then carried on by Williams alone. It was well known not only as a sort of clearing house for continental, especially German, literature, but also for the publication of *The Theological Review* and other contributions to modern religious thought, and of the works of Herbert Spencer, Thomas Huxley and others. Williams & Norgate, over which E. Sydney Williams presided

until his death in 1891, remained at 14, Henrietta Street* (founding there "The Home University Library") until the present century when, for a brief spell, as will presently be seen, the firm was acquired by Allen & Unwin, of which Swan Sonnenschein's old business had already become an integral part.

During his 'prentice days in Henrietta Street, Sonnenschein not only mastered the technique of English publishing but also acquired a profound knowledge of contemporary European thought and scholarship, particularly in German literature, from the flood of cosmopolitan books which passed through Williams & Norgate's hands. Before starting his publishing venture he also gained some experience of second-hand book-selling on his own account. His bibliographical knowledge became so expert that he could always cover his holiday expenses in those early days, if he wished, by the bargains he picked up in the local bookshops.

He was twenty-three when he founded the Swan Sonnenschein company in 1878, seven years after Ruskin had started his unorthodox concern in Kent. By a coincidence, young Sonnenschein's first partner, like Ruskin's right-hand man, was named Allen—J. Archibald Allen, then a young business man with a taste for letters. It was a modest beginning, with offices at 15, Paternoster Square, at that time a comparatively new publishing annex to London's historic centre of the book trade in Paternoster Row. Paternoster Square had recently been built on the site of the unsavoury shambles of old Newgate Market, which had been dis-

* Now the address of Victor Gollancz, Ltd.

mantled on the creation of the Central Meat Market at Smithfield.

Among the early publications of W. Swan Sonnenschein & Allen, the earliest imprint of the firm, were some of Adolf Sonnenschein's Model Lessons on his Number Pictures, *The Science and Art of Arithmetic*, which had a large sale for many years, and other educational works transferred from older houses to swell his son's first catalogue. In 1880 the list of the new firm's publications largely reflected Swan Sonnenschein's training. It included English editions of Mueller's *Life of Field Marshal Count Moltke*, Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology*, in three volumes, translated by one of the founder's uncles, James S. Stallybrass (previously issued by another firm), and the first two series of Josef Seboth's coloured plates of *Alpine Plants*, with A. W. Bennett's text. These were varied with E. Newman's *History of British Ferns*, a selection of *Popular Tales* by Mrs. Sherwood, upon whose evangelical *History of the Goodchild Family* so many mid-Victorian children had been brought up, and an assortment of illustrated gift books. Another publication in the infant years of Sonnenschein & Allen was the *Royal Relief Atlas of All Parts of the World* (1880): a useful geographical aid, with the mountain ranges standing up in ridges, their heights duly graded. Sonnenschein, who was closely connected with the Froebel Society and in personal touch with its moving spirits in this country, also published many kindergarten books, some of which are selling to this day.

Under the pen-name of S. W. Anson, which he adopted at this period, Sonnenschein himself edited an

English adaptation of Wagner's tales of the Old Norsemen, their religion and superstitions, *Asgard and the Gods*, published in 1880, and followed this up with a similar edition of the same author's collection of their legendary lore, *Epics and Romances of the Middle Ages*. He also collaborated with his partner in *A Gathered Sheaf of Golden Grain* and *Fabled Stories from the Zoo*, both books 'written up' to a collection of German blocks of illustrations which Sonnenschein had acquired. 'Temperamentally', wrote Mr. Allen, who was generally responsible for the French translations of these early efforts, Sonnenschein undertaking the German, 'we were excellently suited to collaborate. He was the genius with a wonderful knowledge of modern German literature, while I was (and am) a plain business man. We had one thing in common, however—we were both real workers.'

The first partnership lasted only three years. Mr. Allen, bent on matrimony, realized that a newly-fledged publishing business was scarcely profitable enough for his increasing needs. Each of them, however, always retained a deep regard for the other. Following his first partner's example, but daring to risk all in the future of the publishing firm, Sonnenschein, on September 12, 1882, married Helena Teulon, second daughter of William Hensman Teulon, of Tenchley's Park, Limpsfield, Surrey, a descendant of an old Huguenot family who came over after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. With new partners, fresh capital, and a steadily increasing business, the infant firm gradually struggled to its feet. Throughout his life Swan Sonnenschein was a remarkable blend of other-worldliness and business

acumen: a man of wide erudition whose interests were quickly roused by the simplest human problems; one of whom it might be written, as was written of another distinguished publisher, William Heinemann, that the dream was more than the business.

He put a vast amount of work into some of the books he published. One of the most difficult of his early undertakings was the English translation of Naegeli and Schwendener's well-known treatise on *The Microscope in Theory and Practice*, begun by Frank Crisp (afterwards Sir Frank Crisp, Bart.), Secretary of the Royal Microscopical Society. The translation was revised by John Mayall, Jun., one of the editors of the Microscopical Society's journal. Sonnenschein, who had been an ardent microscopist since his medical student days, helped in no small measure to make the work a success. The translation of Naegeli and Schwendener was published in 1887 and went to a second edition in 1892.

Such portentous and laborious tasks are often the choice of 'dull dogs'. But that would be the last epithet to fit the man who is best remembered by the work which made his name as a bibliographer famous throughout the world. Sufficient proof of this are the books for very young people which he took such pleasure in writing in his early publishing days under the pseudonym of S. W. Anson—*The Three Foolish Little Gnomes*, for instance (1883), and *The Story of Patient Griseldis Retold* (1884). It was under the same pen-name—a further illustration of his catholic taste—that he published in later years his own selection of *Elizabethan Lyrics* as well as a volume of *Shakespearean*

Quotations, besides editing *Selden's Table Talk* and *The Christmas Book of Carols*, and in addition there were the books which he issued under his own name.

'Never was there a gayer spirit than he', declared his son, in speaking of his happy home life; while those who knew him only as a publisher, with his inexhaustible store of book lore and his rare combination of scholarship and business sense, will remember the twinkle that was always lurking behind those keen, far-seeing eyes.

This is no place in which to intrude upon private affairs, but his family played so large a part in his career that this record would be incomplete without some reference to his devoted helpers at home after he began work upon his great bibliography, *The Best Books*, that ambitious task which was originally to have been compiled by one J. Jacobs. The work had been announced in Sonnenschein's list for some years, and after waiting for it from Jacobs in vain the publisher stepped into the breach himself. Thus began a task which robbed an otherwise busy man of his leisure hours for the next half-century and, long before the end, became a burden which only one of his indomitable determination could have endured. The Index Volume of *The Best Books*, published in 1935, which brought this immense undertaking to a close, has been justly described as a 'monument to a family'. The bibliography itself might well have absorbed the concentrated labours of a whole group of scholars.

'It is almost incredible', to quote from the prefatory tribute by the bibliographer's son, the late Dr. W. T. S. Stallybrass, Principal of Brasenose College and Vice-

Chancellor of Oxford University, 'that it should be the work of a man who from beginning to end was fully engaged during all the ordinary working hours on the business side of publishing, and who, night after night, would bring home the work of authors needing his help in order that he might prepare their work for press'. His wife was his assistant throughout, and after their deaths within a few days of each other in 1931, their daughter, Miss Frances H. S. Stallybrass, crowned thirteen years' devotion to the same task by completing the index volume.

One who knew them all well has left a picture of that industrious but supremely happy circle in a letter quoted by Dr. Stallybrass in the preface to the Index Volume already mentioned:

'I look back . . . to you four, each so much, and all together so thoroughly and so finely a family There was that intensity and that intimacy. I think of your father as I knew him then, sensitive and resolute, cautious and enterprising, talking and thoughtful, critical and yet entirely free from prejudice, trenchant and kind, a man of an unusual union of qualities, which was his touch of genius, and in all of them of great spirit. His active genius on the one side and on the other your mother's beautiful personality—her gifts of dignity and patience and practicality and thought and love, and the originality of her humour.'

Ready to explore all fields, the founder of the firm, with his early partners—including Charles Le Bas (son of the Chaplain of Charterhouse) who followed J. A. Allen—ventured into fiction and the periodical market, as well as into general literature. The old

three-decker novel was still in vogue in the 'eighties, though its palmy days were over. Some moderate successes in this form, long since forgotten, appeared under the Sonnenschein imprint, including the fourth Earl of Desart's *Lord and Lady Piccadilly*, and other tales, which had a popular if ephemeral success. Though the publishers little realized it at the time, several best-sellers of the future came knocking at their door. In this connection the most memorable year in the firm's history was that of Queen Victoria's Jubilee—1887—which saw the appearance from the same address not only of *The Best Books* in its original edition and the first English version of Karl Marx's *Capital*, but also of Barrie's first volume, *Better Dead*, Bernard Shaw's *An Unsocial Socialist*—the fifth volume of the *Novels of His Nonage* and the first of all to attain the glory of a cloth cover—and George Moore's denunciation of his native land, *Parnell and his Island*; all books which, though counted today among collectors' treasures, were little valued at their birth.

In the same year Moore, who had already shocked the circulating libraries by *A Modern Lover* and his other early novels, with their realistic slices of life as he saw it, issued his pamphlet *Defensio pro Scriptis Meis* through the same publishers. His *Confessions of a Young Man*, which he afterwards described as a sort of genesis—'the seed of everything I have written since will be found herein'—also bore the Sonnenschein imprint when published for the first time in 1888. 'The end of the century cannot boast of a more original book than *The Confessions of a Young Man*', claimed its author many years later in one of its annotated editions; but though

it sold fairly well and was much discussed in literary circles, it was not one of Sonnenschein's outstanding successes.

Both Shaw and Moore were familiar figures in the publisher's own hospitable home in those days. At 62, Russell Square, there was always the chance of meeting Bernard Bosanquet, Stanton Coit, Professor Muirhead, and poor 'Stepniak', the exiled leader of the Russian revolutionaries, London being still the great refuge of political exiles from all over the Continent. 'Stepniak' published more than one of his works with Sonnenschein, including his two-volume survey of *The Russian Peasant* in 1888, seven years before his death.

It is tantalizing to search the archives of the firm in the hope of finding unpublished letters from these and other contemporaries of note. Alas! little or nothing of the kind is left. Through some mischance the letters from authors which had been preserved among the Swan Sonnenschein papers were destroyed when the reconstructed company moved from Rathbone Place to its present headquarters in Museum Street. Only the correspondence on the publishers' side remains.

It is some consolation to learn that in any case the correspondence would have been somewhat fragmentary, since negotiations of the kind were then largely conducted in the publishers' office by personal interviews with the authors. 'In those early days', writes Mr. Spencer Stallybrass, the founder's cousin, who, as will presently be seen, was closely associated with the firm of George Allen & Unwin until his retirement in 1947, 'we ran a dining-room at Swan Sonnenschein's

with a well-stocked wine bin, and a cook on the premises—all very largely for the sake of our authors, or potential authors, many of whom used to lunch with the partners and discuss publishing matters over the wine—I don't think we sported nuts. I know George Moore honoured our menu at times; also Barrie, and I think Bernard Shaw too.'

Mr. Kitchin also recalls these visits in *The Days of My Youth*, when, as will shortly be explained, he was a junior partner in the firm. 'Shaw, then as now,' he wrote, 'was a striking personality, with his fine face, wild hair, and pleasant Irish intonation. He could talk as well as he wrote, and even better, a rippling flow of good things well put . . .'

It was actually four years before Shaw had found a publisher for his *Unsocial Socialist*; though it struggled to a second edition in the year following publication, it joined the rest of those early novels which remained in oblivion until some forty years later, when they were restored to life in the author's Standard Edition. As he explains in his 1932 preface, *The Unsocial Socialist* was originally intended as the first instalment of an immense work depicting Capitalist Society in dissolution, with its downfall as a final catastrophe. Having finished this volume and found that he had nothing more to say for the moment he decided, he tells us, to defer completion until his education was completed. 'Thirty-seven years having now been devoted to this process, it is too late to resume the interrupted work; for events have outrun me. The contemplated fiction is now fact. My unsocial socialist has come to life as a Bolshevist; and my catastrophe has actually occurred in Communist Russia.

The opinions of the fictitious Trefusis anticipated those of the real Lenin.'

Although disappointed with the sales of *The Unsocial Socialist* Sonnenschein himself was one of the first to recognize the genius which inspired it. 'That is the brightest brain I have ever come across', he remarked at the time in discussing his new author with Mr. Kitchin. In the one-sided correspondence which survives at Ruskin House there is a striking reference to the book in a letter written by Sonnenschein to Shaw on December 30, 1887:

'... I fear *U. S.* has not done much good this half year. I don't feel at all "sorry that you have let us in for this book", or indeed that you have done so. I felt rather keen on the book when I had it, which was before we took it; and I still think it is as clever a novel as we have brought out. If you were to stick to novels, or go in for plays (which are even more suited to you, in my opinion), I believe this book, in common with all your others, if there are more than *Byron*, would work into a good circulation. I certainly don't regret the small sum of money we probably have in *U. S.* still; and shall not do so unless you choose to drop your pen, or die, or do something else foolish.'

It would be interesting to know whether the publisher's shrewd advice about play-writing carried any weight. At all events *The Unsocial Socialist* was the last of the *Novels of His Nonage*. 'With this book', he writes in the foreword to the Standard Edition, 'my career as a novelist may be said to have ended before it began.' Another decade was to pass before he found

his true place among the dramatists. Meantime he tried his hand at critical journalism, his friend William Archer passing on to him certain work of the kind for which he himself had neither the time nor the inclination. This turn of affairs occurred just when Shaw had finished *The Unsocial Socialist*.

'I easily made good at criticism,' he writes in the foreword already mentioned, 'which enabled me to make a living until, about ten years later, I discovered my main vocation in the profession of Shakespeare and Molière, and thus returned to story-telling in its most highly specialised form.'

It was probably the publisher's friendship with Fabians and other leaders of advanced political thought in those days which led to the erroneous notion that he had been a Fabian himself. It is true that he was on friendly terms with many of the advanced 'intellectuals' of his day, and published a number of Socialist texts including, as already mentioned, the first English edition of Volume I of Marx's *Capital*, edited by Engels.

That 'damned book', as both founders of scientific socialism called it—not in the sense that its political opponents damn it today, but because its prolonged and painful gestation became, in Marx's words, 'a perfect nightmare'—did not make its first appearance in English until 1887, four years after the author's death. The first German edition of the famous Volume I, which has ever since ranked as a whole in itself, independent and sufficient, had been published twenty years before. Though often called, on the Continent, as Engels put it, 'the Bible of the working classes', the world, as yet, seemed profoundly unmoved by its

teaching. Marx had died one of the best-hated men of his age, and it was long before an English publisher could be found for the writings of the 'Red Terror Doctor'.

The version published in Paternoster Square under the early imprint of Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey & Co. was the translation by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, whose text, from the German edition containing Marx's final revisions, was edited by Engels himself. Some of the difficulties of publication at that time under the Socialist Law are indicated by Engels in a letter to Florence Wischnewetsky relating to the American market:

'Unless the trade arrangements are very different in America from those in Europe, the booksellers will not deal in works published by outside establishments belonging to a working man's party. This is why Chartist and Owenite publications are nowhere preserved and nowhere to be had, not even in the British Museum; and why all our German party publications are—and were long before the Socialist Law—not to be had through the trade, and remained unknown to the public outside the party. That is a state of things which sometimes cannot be avoided, but ought to be avoided wherever possible. And you will not blame me if I wish to avoid it for the English translations of my writings, having suffered from it in Germany for more than forty years. The state of things in England is such that publishers can be got—either now or in the near future—for Socialist works.'*

* Quoted by Dona Torr in her Appendix to the Moore-Aveling translation, Allen & Unwin, 1938.

The first English edition of *Capital*—‘this incubus’, as he called it, which had cost Engels a year of hard editorial work, met with greater success than was expected of it. ‘The English *Capital*’, he wrote on February 12, 1887, ‘is going very well; the ass of a publisher, who had no notion what he had got hold of, is quite surprised.’ A month later Engels boasted that the English sale had been so rapid that the whole first edition, save fifty copies, was already exhausted, and a second was in preparation. ‘And this’, he added, ‘despite very little advertising and before a single big paper has given it a notice.’

The ‘ass of a publisher’ was probably not so pleased at the success of *Capital* as he would have been over some of his less revolutionary books. Indeed, such serious exception was taken to its teaching (through one of Sonnenschein’s more conservative partners) that after selling steadily for some years—it never had a really considerable circulation at that period—it was remaindered with Glaisher’s. Glaisher’s reprinted it and continued to publish the work until the reconstruction of Ruskin House, when the copyright was re-acquired by Allen & Unwin. They subsequently issued in 1928 the version by Eden and Cedar Paul, which was based upon the final German text. This did not, however, supersede the classic Moore–Aveling translation, which in 1938 was issued in a photographic reprint with a supplement, edited by Dona Torr, which included the changes made by Engels in the fourth German edition and his prefaces to the third and fourth editions. Both English versions continue to be published by Allen & Unwin today.

Sonnenschein himself was remarkably catholic in his interests and outlook, and ready to publish authoritative books from any political standpoint. Witness, by way of contrast to the works of Marx and Engels, the *Imperial Parliament* series which his firm issued between 1885 and 1888 under the editorship of Sydney C. Buxton, afterwards Earl Buxton, Governor-General of South Africa during the War of 1914-18. This was a popular series of shilling volumes—all written by Members of Parliament—discussing the rights and responsibilities of citizens as reformers thought they should be. There were volumes by the Marquess of Lorne, for instance, on *Imperial Federation*, and Sir John Lubbock, afterwards Lord Avebury, on *Representation*; others on *Women's Suffrage*, *Church Reform*, and so forth.

Barrie came into touch with the firm not only with his first book, *Better Dead*, but also as a contributor to *Time*, a 'Monthly Magazine of Interesting and Amusing Literature'—long since forgotten—which had originally been one of Edmund Yates's numerous offspring among the periodicals of his day. *Time* had been born in the spring of 1879, shortly after the Sonnenschein house was founded. Sonnenschein took it over from Yates in a vain attempt to make it a success under a series of new editors, including B. M. Rankin and Miss E. M. Abdy-Williams, whose three-volume novel, *The World Below*, they also published. On her marriage Miss Abdy-Williams was succeeded by the Rev. E. D. Price, the original editor of *Hazell's Annual*. The first issue of that annual was prepared at Sonnenschein's office, and Mr. Spencer Stallybrass, who has been

mentioned earlier, worked for many months as his assistant in that task.

Mr. Price was succeeded by Walter Sichel, remembered today as a brilliant critic, as well as the author of *Bolingbroke and his Times*, *Sheridan*, and other biographies which have become standard works on their subjects. Sichel has left a graphic account, in one of his reminiscent chapters in *The Sands of Time*, of his experience in Sonnenschein's office after accepting the editorship.

'I wished to make *Time* immortal', he writes, and he succeeded in enlisting a strong group of distinguished contributors, besides many whose reputations were still to make. Inquiring about some anonymous contributions, 'By a Schoolboy', appearing in the *St. James's Gazette*, which greatly took his fancy, he learnt that the author was a comparatively obscure journalist, J. M. Barrie by name, who had been writing a number of anonymous articles for the *St. James's* under Greenwood's memorable editorship, during the previous two years. Sichel asked his publishers to invite young Barrie to the office—which he had already visited several times in connection with his book—to discuss a series of theatrical criticisms which he had in mind under the title 'What the Pit Says', in the form of dramatic dialogues. 'Next morning', writes Sichel, 'Mr. Barrie called—so shy, so diffident, that one could hardly have divined the brilliance of his brain. He kindly consented, and wrote such a wonderful series of Pit-Conversations on plays that I was awed into admiration. Then I begged him to write for the Christmas number, which was to be called *A House of Seven Gables*. He agreed, and com-

posed an "editor's story" of ironic humour—individual, indefinable.'

It was one of Barrie's anonymous contributions to the *St. James's Gazette* that formed the nucleus of his first book, *Better Dead*, which was published at his own expense some two years later. This was the author's first experiment with the dialect novel, and preceded *A Window in Thrums*. He had small hope then, as he explained many years later in the preface to the American edition of his works, of getting anyone 'to accept the Scotch' when this experimental *jeu d'esprit*—poking fun, apparently, at the ideas propounded by W. H. Mallock under the title *Is Life Worth Living?*—appeared in November, 1887 (post-dated 1888 on the title page).

In his recollections of those early years in London, issued in 1937 under the title *The Greenwood Hat*, Barrie declares that he lost about £25 over his first publishing venture. 'Why this article should have encouraged the anonymous author to its enlargement', he adds, 'I cannot see; however insignificant the others are, this one seems to me among the smallest of the catch. Nevertheless, from no other book of his had he such a lively rush of blood to the head as when *Better Dead* was first placed in his hands. For a week or more he carried it in his pocket, he felt for it with his fingers, and slipped into passages to make sure that some sentence was still there.'

And again, Barrie reveals his tender concern for his first-born: 'There was a week when I loved to carry it in my pocket, and did not think it a dead weight. Once I almost saw it find a purchaser. She was a pretty girl,

and it lay on a bookstall, and she read some pages and smiled, and then retired, and came back again and began another chapter. Several times she went away without the book, but I am still of opinion that, had it been just a little bit better, she would have bought it.'

Nevertheless, the book struggled to a second edition in 1888, and is still included, in a five-shilling edition (its ninth impression), in Allen & Unwin's list. It was originally only a slim book, in a yellow paper cover, published at a shilling; but single copies have since realized more than £50 in the sale room, while the manuscript itself was sold in London to an American collector in 1930 for no less than £2,400.

In a moving sequel to the association thus begun in Sonnenschein's office, Walter Sichel, recalling the War which cost him so dearly many years later, adds: 'Our gifted and gallant eldest son—to be followed by his devoted brother—had already fallen when the kind Barrie wrote as follows to their mother: . . . "I am very sorry you lost your boy. He stood the great test of manhood, and whether we could have done so, I don't know. It should make us humble."'

In the reminiscences already mentioned Sichel describes his interview with another of Sonnenschein's early authors: 'a tall, pale, slender man, in bearing languid yet immoderately youthful', who bearded him in his den bearing the manuscript of a novel entitled *Don Juan Junior*. The visitor's name was George Moore. 'In vain did I assure him that ours was a strictly family magazine designed for homesteads that would shiver at the very name of his romance. He could not agree. Why not a Don Juan Junior in South Kensington, just

as there had once been an "Oedipus at Colonus"? Why not? He seemed never to have heard of the Puritan Fathers or even of Columbus.'

Nevertheless, it was in the pages of *Time* that portions of *The Confessions of a Young Man* made their first appearance before Sonnenschein published the complete book. Mr. Kitchin, in his own *Days of My Youth*, gives a sketch of him in the publisher's office which may be quoted as a companion to his vignette of the author of *The Unsocial Socialist*. 'Moore,' he writes, 'like Shaw, had a good head. He had recently recovered from the shingles, and I can picture him as he stood before the fire, his hands behind his back, his pale face covered in blotches, choosing his words like an artist and holding the whole room with his talk as he addressed us with more than the aplomb of a college lecturer.'

Sonnenschein's were heavily handicapped with periodicals in those days. Besides their monthly magazine *Time*, they were running *The Contemporary Pulpit*, a sixpenny monthly homiletic magazine which had been suggested to them by William Robertson Nicoll in 1883, then Minister of the Free Church at Kelso. The first number appeared under his editorship in January 1884, but shortly afterwards he began the closer and more enduring association with Hodder & Stoughton in the series of volumes which he edited for them under the title *The Clerical Library*. This led to his editorship, first of their monthly theological journal *The Expositor* and then, when ill-health forced him to leave his pulpit and turn instead to a literary career in London, to that of *The British Weekly*. Sonnenschein's continued *The Contemporary Pulpit* after his resignation for

another seven or eight years, issuing in connection with it The Contemporary Pulpit Library, a series of collections of contemporary sermons; but the journal's struggle for existence became an increasing drain on the firm's resources.

In the meantime, on the floor below Sichel at Sonnenschein's offices, another journal was being produced by that unique personality, Harry Quilter, whose dogmatic criticism roused Whistler's implacable wrath in the 'eighties. 'Tired of being edited', as he afterwards wrote, Quilter had now plunged into periodical literature with a production of his own, *The Universal Review*, published at half a crown, by 'Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey & Co., Paternoster Square and 24, Warwick Lane.' The first number appeared in May 1888, flamboyantly announced by its creator in a full-page advertisement in *The Times*, overflowing with superlatives which would not be unworthy today of the florid announcements of the latest film.

Possessed of a competence which enabled him to indulge in such whims, Quilter pleaded guilty to 'a habit of sitting down to build in pleasant disregard of the cost'. It seems to have been largely a desire to escape from the perpetual atmosphere of ill-will created by his own criticisms which gave birth to *The Universal Review*. In the fragment of autobiography which was among the papers published after his death under the title *Opinions on Men, Women and Things*, he relates how this haphazard idea first took shape. Dictating to his secretary an article, entitled 'Our Noble Selves', which refused to 'go' satisfactorily, he suddenly interrupted himself to ask her: 'Shall we start a review?' Her

answer, we are told, was a decided 'Yes!' and so surprised was Quilter at this unexpected and unqualified affirmative that 'then and there the decision was taken, the article laid aside, and we were hard at work on letters to possible contributors'.

Sonnenschein's, who published for him, were too heavily involved by their own undertakings in the same field to share in any financial risk over *The Universal*. 'Of the arrangements entered into with them,' writes Quilter, 'I shall say only that they had not, from first to last, the smallest pecuniary interest in the review; that they fulfilled honourably the engagements they entered into with me, and that I have so little reason to complain of their conduct in any respect that I have selected them to publish the present volume'—the autobiography that was never finished—'and other ventures'.

The journal itself, freely illustrated and including fiction, poetry and other features usually disdained by the great monthly reviews, started with its rare crack of the whip in *The Times*, and its angel blowing its own trumpet on the cover. It was an encouraging success at first. But the hey-day of the monthly review was passing. Popular taste, that unknown quantity on which so many publishing hopes have been wrecked, only welcomed it at first as a novelty. Half a crown was more than most people were prepared to go on paying for it.

Above all, the advertisement revenue on which the fate of the new review depended was hopelessly inadequate. Before it came to an end, however, in December 1890, it had drawn contributions from many eminent authors and artists both English and foreign. One of

its best stories was written by Henry James—'The Lesson of the Master'; and in 1889 George Meredith contributed his satirical poem, 'Jump to Glory Jane', a separate limited edition of which was published by Sonnenschein's in 1892, with Laurence Housman's illustrations—another book-collectors' treasure today.

Quilter told one of the publishing partners, Mr. Kitchin, that he had only intended his venture as a joke; that he meant to spend £5,000 on it and then stop. He had a good run for his money—nearly three years—and if he lost £5,000 he gained a wife, Mr. Kitchin mentioning in his memoirs that he married the attractive lady who acted as his secretary.

Time and *The Contemporary Pulpit*, after a losing struggle in an overcrowded market, also gave up the ghost, leaving the publishers again free to concentrate their energies on books. They were now issuing, among other scholarly works, the early volumes of Dr. George McColl Theal's monumental *History of South Africa*, which occupied the author's almost undivided attention for something like half a century and was eventually published by Allen & Unwin in a greatly enlarged edition in eleven volumes.

Although the founder of the firm took no active part in politics, calling himself a Liberal at one time, but in later life leaning towards what his son calls 'a generous Conservatism', he was always profoundly interested in the deeper issues of life. He could not remain unaffected by the social and political stirrings of the years which saw the birth of the first Ethical Society in this country, as well as of the first British Socialist organization, the Fabian Society. It was suggested after his death, as

already mentioned, that he had himself joined the Fabians, just as it was stated in the obituary tribute by the late Laurie Magnus in *The Times*—on what grounds the publisher's family are at a loss to imagine—that his father had fled to England as a Kossuth rebel. There was no truth in either statement.

With his wife, the young publisher became a member of the first Ethical Society in England, and issued its literature. This included many volumes of the Ethical Library, published at some loss to himself, and long since out of print. With this series, as with the great Library of Philosophy with which the name of his firm has ever since been identified, Sonnenschein was closely associated with Professor J. H. Muirhead, already an intimate family friend of some years' standing, and largely concerned with the beginning of the Ethical Movement in England.

The 'eighties, as Professor Muirhead has written, 'were days if not of lost causes at least of somewhat forlorn hopes'. One of the most successful of these was the attempt to rescue the study of philosophy in England from its insular dogmatism and secure for it a worthier place in the realm of international thought. The Library of Philosophy, which Professor Muirhead edited with that twofold object in view, offered little hope of pecuniary reward to English publishers, but Sonnenschein, whose interest in philosophy was sincere and deep, did not hesitate to shoulder the financial responsibility. The series itself was conceived about 1887 or 1888, Erdmann's *History of Philosophy*, in three volumes, appearing by way of introduction to the whole Library in 1890. This work was issued under the

editorship of Professor W. S. Hough, with whom in those years Professor Muirhead was in close touch, and who played a great part in the conception and planning of the series.

Devoted largely to the works of continental philosophers and British scholars whose names for the most part were known only to specialists, the Library of Philosophy called for disinterested zeal on the part of everyone concerned. Sonnenschein, to quote Professor Muirhead's own words, 'proved a very present help, if not in time of trouble, at any rate in time of very small things with myself and the group of philosophical friends with whom I was in contact'.

Notwithstanding years of discouragement, the publisher remained loyal to an undertaking which not only brought English philosophy into close touch with continental thought and secured for it fuller consideration than had been hitherto received from the great German histories of philosophy, but also countered the impression that the influx from abroad had interrupted the continuity of the great tradition of Anglo-Saxon idealism.

This was effected, to a large extent, in the earlier series of books, containing among others Bosanquet's *History of Aesthetic*, Albee's *History of English Utilitarianism*, Bonar's *Philosophy and Political Economy*, Brett's *History of Psychology** and Ritchie's *Natural Rights*. Gradually, however, the scope of the Library was extended into something more international. Not only was original work of a high order being produced

* Recently reissued in a one-volume edition, edited by R. S. Peters (Allen & Unwin, 1953).

by such writers as Bradley, Stout, Bertrand Russell, Radhakrishnan, Urban, Montague and others in both England and America, but a new interest had developed in foreign works, both classical and contemporary, and translations were made from German, Italian and French. Thus, under the imprint of Allen & Unwin, the Library has been continued in the confident hope that it will contribute in this highest field of thought to intellectual co-operation between nations, helping, in the words of Dr. Rudolph Metz,* to build 'those bridges which are so hard to build from the political side'.

Of the original volumes sponsored by Swan Sonnenschein, many are still on the active list of Allen & Unwin. Erdmann's *History of Philosophy* and Bosanquet's *History of Aesthetic* have run through numerous editions in the present century, although the former is now out of date. Still in demand are Ritchie's *Natural Rights* (1895), Stout's *Analytic Psychology* (1896), Sir James Baillie's translation of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* (1910) and the works of Henri Bergson. Much, then, was owed to the generosity and foresight of the original publisher, of whom Professor Muirhead wrote in a letter to *The Times* at his death: 'Little as I know of the history of publication, I doubt whether idealism of this kind has been common in it; but it was characteristic of the man, and I have ventured to think worthy of record in the attempt to do justice to his courageous life as a publisher and writer.' Tribute should also be paid to Professor Muirhead, who remained Editor of the Library until his death in 1940, when he was succeeded by Dr. J. E. Turner of Liverpool. Since 1952

* In *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*.

the editorship has been in the hands of Professor H. D. Lewis of the University College of North Wales, Bangor.

Side by side with the weightier works in the Library of Philosophy came the succession of scarlet-bound books in the Social Science Series. Originally issued at half a crown, this series covered most of the burning questions of the day. It ranged from Bernard Bosanquet's edition of Dr. Schäffle's *Quintessence of Socialism*, which has reached its eleventh impression, and Holyoake's *History of the Rochdale Pioneers* (15th impression), to the history of *The Cooperative Movement in Great Britain* by Mrs. Sidney Webb (Lady Passfield) now in its tenth impression, and Ostrogorski's comparative study of *The Rights of Women*; from Rousseau's *Social Contract* and Godwin's *Political Justice* to books by Marx and Engels.

One of the early volumes was a section of Professor J. E. Thorold Rogers's standard history of English labour, *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*,* originally published by Sonnenschein in 1884. Running through the 'eighties and 'nineties, as well as into the twentieth century, the Social Science Series numbered upwards of a hundred volumes in all, many of which, revised and brought up to date, are still on the active list of Allen & Unwin. So, too, are the seven volumes in the Schopenhauer series translated by T. Bailey Saunders in 1892-3, selected from the occasional papers in the *Parerga and Paralipomena*; these exhibit the founder of modern systematic pessimism in his more acceptable rôle as a

* Recently reissued, with a new Preface by G. D. H. Cole (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd.)

littérateur, and have been reprinted in a one-volume omnibus edition.

The renaissance of the 'nineties, which saw J. M. Barrie and Robert Louis Stevenson, Thomas Hardy and George Meredith, coming into their own, and witnessed the arrival of Rudyard Kipling and H. G. Wells, as well as of Aubrey Beardsley, the *Yellow Book*, and the singing birds in John Lane's *Nest* at the Bodley Head, left little permanent mark on Sonnenschein's business. Nevertheless, the firm continued to publish fiction, besides contributions to most other departments of literature.

Publishing being always something of a gamble—the element of chance is one of its chief attractions—it was the luck of the game that Barrie's next books, *Auld Licht Idylls* and *When a Man's Single*, both issued by Hodder & Stoughton in 1888, through that astute critic William Robertson Nicoll, covered author and publishers with glory and profit; also that Robert Hichens, whose first tale, *The Coastguard's Secret*, written when he was seventeen, was published by Sonnenschein's, should leap into the front rank with his next book, *The Green Carnation*, that brilliant satire of Oscar Wilde and the aesthetic movement which Heinemann issued anonymously in 1894, when Oscar Wilde was still at the height of his fame. *The Green Carnation* fell into Heinemann's lap through Sir Douglas Straight, then editing the *Pall Mall Gazette*, to whom the author had first submitted it for possible serialization.

Another novelist who slipped through Sonnenschein's fingers in the early 'nineties was Charles

Kingsley's youngest daughter, 'Lucas Malet', wife of the Rev. William Harrison, then Rector of Clovelly and formerly her father's curate. 'Lucas Malet' had written several novels without attracting much attention before Sonnenschein's published *The Wages of Sin* in 1891, with which she made her mark. This book, with its powerful realism, was in advance of its time, creating a storm by its introduction of topics and situations which offended Victorian ideas of literary propriety; but it was one of the publisher's outstanding successes in fiction. The younger house of Methuen & Co. presently took it over and a few years later published the most discussed and most widely read of all 'Lucas Malet's' books—*The History of Richard Calmady*.

Thus Sonnenschein & Co. were unfortunate, for the most part, in their fiction. Their chief contributions to letters continued to be in history, science, philosophy and scholarship generally. One of their outstanding books in the 'nineties was F. H. Bradley's metaphysical treatise, *Appearance and Reality*, a work on the nature of ultimate reality and of man's relation to it, which, more than any other book in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as Professor Muirhead wrote, can be said to have been epochmaking in British philosophy.

Other works which lent distinction to their list in somewhat later years were Professor Adam Sedgwick's classic *Text-book of Zoology*, which has gone through several revised editions since its original appearance in three volumes in 1898; and Sir Paul Vinogradoff's erudite history of *The Growth of the Manor*.

The directors of the firm at this period included Mr. Herbert Wigram, an old Wykehamist, who joined in

1887, and discovered a congenial interest in publishing on retiring from the Madras Civil Service. Mr. Wigram took an increasingly active part in the business until his death in 1914, but will probably be remembered less as a publisher than as the father of three distinguished sons: Lord Wigram of Clewer (who was raised to the peerage in 1935), for some years Private Secretary to King George V, and a prominent member of the Royal Household for many years, and his two brothers, General Sir Kenneth Wigram, A.D.C. General to King George V from 1933 to 1936, and Vice-Admiral Ernest Wigram.

Others partners at the end of the 'eighties included Mr. Rupert Oswald Smith, of Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, and Mr. D. B. Kitchin, of Harrow and Trinity. In the reminiscences already mentioned Mr. Kitchin relates how Mr. Wigram used to talk to him about his boys and wonder what fate had in store for them. 'I am glad to think', he adds, 'that he lived long enough to know that they would not disappoint him, for they were a trio to gladden a father's heart.'

It was Mr. Kitchin who founded *The Public Schools Year Book*, first published under the Sonnenschein imprint in 1889. He describes in his memoirs how, when he originated the idea, it was at once supported by all the partners, three of whom, representing Eton, Harrow and Winchester, formed a committee to discuss details. The main task devolved on Mr. Kitchin, who undertook the editorship; and although he retired from publishing two years later he remained editor for fourteen years. The success of *The Public Schools Year Book* led to *The Girls' Public Schools Year Book* and *The*

Schoolmasters' Year Book under the same auspices, but different editorship. The three annuals were subsequently taken over by a new company formed for that purpose under the style of The Year Book Press.

Mr. Kitchin tells us that he resigned his partnership because three years' experience had convinced him that life in a publisher's office was not only bad for his health, but not too good for his pocket. 'It was a pleasant parting', he says; and, in the course of his narrative, he pays a warm tribute to the senior partner and founder of the firm as a man of wide interests and many accomplishments; an authority on bibliography, an acute business man, knowing all there is to be known—'and that is a life study in itself—about printing, paper and allied details; always first and last at the office'. 'He used to say', adds Mr. Kitchin, 'that he could always make the expenses of a country holiday by buying books and pictures at the local sales; but he spent very few and spent these mostly fishing.'

Shortly before Mr. Kitchin appeared on the scene in 1888, one of his predecessors, Francis Lowrey, whose name shared the imprint with Swan Sonnenschein on some of the firm's most noteworthy productions, had transferred his activities to South Africa. Although no longer a publisher, he secured for his old company the contract for the selection and provision of books for the new library at the Rand Club in Johannesburg, of which he had meantime become one of the moving spirits. Sonnenschein himself, with his rare bibliographical knowledge and judgment, was admirably equipped for the task. Under his guidance the nucleus of a first-rate library was formed, the contract running

into thousands of pounds and extending over some years.

In 1895 the publishing business was converted into a limited liability company. One of the directors was Colonel Philip Hugh Dalbiac, who, retiring from the Army in 1890, and joining Sonnenschein's in 1891, became the Conservative Member of Parliament for North Camberwell. A man of high linguistic attainments, he was mainly responsible for the successful Dictionaries of Quotations which appeared in Sonnenschein's Reference Series. His own *Dictionary of English Quotations*, published in 1896, and enlarged in its fifth edition (1908), has become a standard work. He also collaborated with Thomas B. Harbottle—who was responsible for several other popular additions to the series—in the companion volumes of French and Italian quotations (1900), while his wife, Lilian Dalbiac, compiled the *Dictionary of German Quotations* which followed in 1906.

Colonel Dalbiac also originated the Special Campaign Series, to which some of the leading military critics of the day contributed. More than a score of volumes appeared, many of which remained in Allen & Unwin's list until the 1939 war, and one, *Napoleon's Campaigns in Italy*, by Burton, is still in constant use.

Colonel Dalbiac himself wrote the volume on *Chancellorsville and Gettysburg in the American War of Secession*. This appeared in 1911, the year in which, as presently recorded, the amalgamation took place between Swan Sonnenschein & Company and George Allen & Sons.

Besides devoting himself to politics and publishing, Colonel Dalbiac had long been an ardent supporter of the London Volunteers and Territorials, commanding the 18th Middlesex Rifle Volunteers from 1896 to 1908 before raising and commanding the Transport and Supply Column of the 2nd London Division, Territorial Forces (1908-12). For these services he received the C.B. at King George's Coronation in 1911. When war broke out three years later, on the very day on which his publishing business was being finally merged in the new company formed under the existing style of George Allen & Unwin Limited, he raised and commanded the 60th Divisional Train, himself serving in France and Salonika in 1916-17.

Mention must now be made of one distinguished author who, having long since published both with Swan Sonnenschein and George Allen, formed a sort of connecting link when these firms combined forces in 1911. This was Edward Carpenter, 'democratic author and poet', as he described himself. Carpenter's association with Swan Sonnenschein's company began in the early days of the Social Science Series. A consuming passion to live the simple life had led him to abandon his Cambridge Fellowship and Holy Orders, and he was at that time writing essays and lecturing on social subjects while running his farm at Millthorpe and selling his fruit and vegetables in the Sheffield Market, besides inaugurating a sandal-making industry as a side-line and establishing the Sheffield Socialist Club. Two volumes of his collected papers belonging to this busy period appeared in Sonnenschein's Social Science Series—*England's Ideal*, revealing, as the author him-

self has said, the influences in style and moral bias both of Ruskin and Marx; and *Civilisation: Its Cause and Cure*, which had a wide circulation far beyond its author's native land, and has been translated into many languages.

Towards Democracy, 'the start-point and kernel of all my later work'—in Carpenter's own words—'the centre from which the other books have radiated', written as he believed from a different plane . . . 'from some predominant mood or consciousness superseding the purely intellectual', also came, in time, to bear the Sonnenschein imprint. The story of its early vicissitudes is worth retelling. Its first edition, published at the author's expense in Manchester in 1883, had fallen quite flat. It was reissued in London by T. Fisher Unwin,* but that publisher, alarmed by Carpenter's writings on the relations of the sexes—it was the time of the Oscar Wilde troubles—turned even *Towards Democracy* out of his shop. Failing to find a home for it in London, Carpenter reissued the same edition in Manchester, until he learned that the Labour Press which handled it there on his behalf was on the verge of bankruptcy. Knowing that the remainder of the edition was his own property he was obliged, in order to prevent it from falling into the creditors' hands, to smuggle it away into the safe keeping of a local friend, who had offered storage room in his office. Carpenter hired a dray, as he records in 'The Story of My Books' (included in *My Days and Dreams*): 'And so one foggy morning, with a good part of a ton of *Towards Democracy* on board—which I helped to load and unload—I

* Step-uncle of Sir Stanley Unwin.

jogged with the drayman through the streets of Manchester amid the heavy turmoil of the cotton goods and other traffic. A strange load—and I never before realized how heavy the book was.'

There it lay for some months, until the author completed arrangements with Swan Sonnenschein & Co. to sell the book on commission, and the stock was transferred into their hands. 'From that time', writes Carpenter, 'its sales slowly went forward—from a hundred or a hundred and fifty copies per annum in 1902, to eight hundred or nine hundred in 1910 [1911] when the Sonnenschein business, and with it my book, passed into the hands of George Allen & Co.'

With the fourth instalment of the work, which appeared separately in 1902 and was incorporated with the earlier parts for the first time in 1905, *Towards Democracy*, begun so ingloriously twenty-one years before, at length assumed its permanent form and, as its author puts it, 'some sort of rather indefinite place in the world of letters'.

Most of Edward Carpenter's later books were published by Swan Sonnenschein & Co.; others had been issued by George Allen. Thus the complete works, together with those of Ruskin, Marx and other thinkers ahead of their time, fell naturally into the new list when the two firms combined.

It is remarkable in how many directions Swan Sonnenschein & Co., like their successors, were often in advance of their times, scenting new ideas and coming men before they had arrived. Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, for instance, was brought out by them in its English translation some years before the boom in

psycho-analysis began. The third edition of this work has gone through seventeen impressions in its English version by Dr. Brill.*

'It is interesting to note', writes Sir Stanley Unwin, 'that although the Swan Sonnenschein firm had a world-wide reputation and enjoyed great prestige, a recent examination of its accounts for the period 1904 to 1910 revealed that the yearly turnover averaged only £14,000. As an indication of the quality of the publications of the firm it would be true to say that the present sale (more than forty years later) of the books inherited from Swan Sonnenschein by George Allen & Unwin at least exceeds £14,000 per annum.'

The control of the firm had been in the hands of Colonel Dalbiac and the senior director, Mr. Wigram, since its founder left to become the guiding spirit in George Routledge & Sons. For a few years after the reconstruction of that house in 1902, Swan Sonnenschein retained his association with his old firm, still giving it part-time control. Increasing developments, however, at Broadway House, his new headquarters, gradually made the break inevitable. Thus, on his resignation, Mr. Wigram and Colonel Dalbiac remained in joint control until the amalgamation in 1911 with the house of George Allen & Sons, the history of which is traced in the following pages. Swan Stallybrass, who remained active to the end, died in 1931 at the age of seventy-five. 'First and last he was a bookman,' wrote

* This classic work has just been retranslated under the general editorship of James Strachey for the Standard Edition of *The Complete Psychological Works of Freud* issued by The Hogarth Press and is also separately published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Laurie Magnus, who had been associated with him in the resuscitation of the house of George Routledge & Sons, 'and his name will long be remembered in the history of London publishing in this century and the last.'

John Ruskin and George Allen

THE author of *Modern Painters* had just turned fifty when he opened a fresh chapter in his career, first by accepting the Slade Professorship of Fine Arts at Oxford and then, as part of his brave new world, by plunging into publishing with a system entirely his own. Deep in the throes of his pitiful romance with Rose La Touche, the girl for whom he had written *Sesame and Lilies*, Ruskin had been alternating between hope and fear through long years of waiting. As was ever his way in trouble he sought what refuge and comfort he could in continuous work, throwing himself with consuming enthusiasm into his revolutionary and often paradoxical schemes for reforming the whole framework of social and industrial England.

‘I have been ordered to make our English youth care somewhat for the arts,’ he wrote in the first letter of *Fors Clavigera*, dated January 1, 1871, with which he started publishing on his own account, ‘and must put my uttermost strength into that business.’

Since he regarded the arts as inseparable from social and political economy, he meant to foster those ideals of life, encouraging a new interest in the beauty of nature, the revival of handicraft and work upon the land, as well as the reconstruction of trade and commerce. All this he had been preaching in the past and was presently to put into practice through his St.

George's Guild. This Guild was founded by Ruskin later in the same year, with his gift of £7,000, a tithe, as he then estimated, of his private fortune; and *Fors* served as its monthly journal.

The journal was devoted to every aspect of his New Political Philosophy and attacked, among other matters, the whole system of credits, discounts and other 'fungus growths' which Ruskin contended were largely responsible for the material distress he saw on all sides. This being so, *Fors* could not logically be published by trade methods in which such practices still persisted.

It made no difference to this dogmatic pioneer of the 'net' system that the principles which he now attacked were as stoutly maintained by other authors and men of affairs as well as by the trade itself. Literary giants like Dickens and Carlyle, and public opinion in an age when Free Trade was a fetish, had long since opposed any system of restriction, holding that every man, whatever his calling, must be left to the fair and free exercise of his own honest enterprise and thrift.

Thus the disease which, as Ruskin saw more clearly than anyone, had long been sapping the strength of the trade became more rampant than ever. Booksellers undersold their neighbours unashamedly and without restriction. Although this evil persisted for some years after Ruskin's failing powers removed him from the fray—until, indeed, the two great organizations were formed to place the whole trade on a sounder footing towards the end of the nineteenth century—it was Ruskin who first proved that it could be cured. To that extent he paved the way to the system which is now regarded as the Magna Carta of the trade, the Book-

sellers' and the Publishers Associations combining forces to bring the old ruinous practice to an end.

Before he started his own publishing experiment with *Fors* in 1871, Ruskin's books had appeared through Smith, Elder & Co., who, in the course of a long and friendly association, had issued more of Ruskin's works than those of any other in their list of illustrious authors, which included Thackeray and Charlotte Brontë amongst others. Ruskin's association with the firm had begun many years previously when Smith Elder's offices were in Cornhill—hence the name of the famous magazine which they subsequently founded under Thackeray's editorship. Ruskin's father, himself a man of somewhat remarkable character—'shrewd, practical, generous, with pure ideals both in life and art', in Frederick Harrison's estimate—inordinately proud of young John's literary gifts, had been piqued by John Murray's lukewarmness when he had proposed that the great Albemarle Street publisher should issue his son's MS. on art at the Ruskins' expense. Murray, then in failing health and nearing the end of his days, was probably prejudiced against the work by paternal enthusiasm. 'What seemed chiefly to offend Mr. Ruskin,' wrote George Smith in his reminiscences many years later, 'was the fact that Murray had declined to read the book in manuscript. If he was going to publish it, he remarked, he had better put it into type and then he would read it.'

Thus, in the words of Leonard Huxley, who wrote the privately printed history of *The House of Smith Elder*, 'the elder Ruskin unbosomed himself in Cornhill and produced the book. It was *Modern Painters*. The title

was due to the publishers, Ruskin originally naming it "Turner and the Ancients". The subject no doubt appealed to Elder's tastes, which he could indulge in safety in a book published on commission terms. Such was the beginning of a thirty years' business alliance and close friendship during which Smith Elder published all Ruskin's books.'

Modern Painters moved very slowly at first, but paved the way to more popular success for *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*; it also led to the pleasant social intercourse which those more leisurely days made possible in the book world. George Smith, whose noblest monument remains in that princely undertaking, *The Dictionary of National Biography*—now issued by the Oxford University Press—was soon on the friendliest terms with the Ruskins. John Ruskin, senior, who had studied under Nasmyth, the painter, retained his interest in art after entering the wine trade in the firm of Ruskin, Telford and Domecq, Sherry Importers, of whom it used to be said that 'Domecq supplied the sherry, Telford the capital, and Ruskin the brains'.

The younger John, as his theories of social economy developed, was apt to compare the methods of his father's business with those of the book trade. There is a characteristic instance of this in one of his letters to William Smith Williams, the publisher's reader and right-hand man, who, as Sir Sidney Lee bore witness, played a useful part behind the scenes of nineteenth-century literature. It was Williams who wrote the historic letter of encouragement which took Charlotte Brontë to Smith Elder in 1847. Nearly twenty years later (November 1865) Williams had written to Ruskin

expressing the hope that his *Ethics of the Dust* would be ready before Christmas; to which the author, whose bark, be it remembered, was always worse than his bite, wrote:

‘I don’t know when I have been more disappointed or (in a sort of way) provoked than by your quietly saying “I hope” that volume will be out before Xmas. My notion of business is to say either it can or can’t—and shall or shan’t. And certainly, having sent four sheets to press to-day, and being ready to send the last sheet but one revised tomorrow, I don’t see why it should be a matter of “hope”. I know that binding must take time; but I fancy all these things are matters of more *energy* Meantime, what about the binding and price? That’s another thing that much provokes me. I have no idea of “business” in which my 3/6d. book is allowed to sell over counter in retail for 2/10d.—which is the sum for which my friend T. Richmond bought *Sesame and Lilies* the other day. I think it is very shameful. My father never saw his wine sold so. He has seen his £60 butt sell for £70—but not the other way. Well, I know it is for no want of good will on your part, but I don’t like it . . .’

George Smith, in his recollections, gives his own version of what he describes as Ruskin’s ‘rather erratic’ views in respect of the publication of his works:

‘He wanted to apply the principles of his social economy to them. He insisted that there should be a certain price fixed upon each book, and that the booksellers should add what they pleased as their profit; but

in this way the purchaser would know exactly what the profit was. This arrangement did not suit the booksellers, and, as a consequence, his books had a comparatively small sale. I was on my own ground in this discussion, and Ruskin did not like a debate in which he had not the best of the argument. On his own topics he always had so much the best of the argument that whenever he asked my opinion on any work of art, or architecture, I used to say: "No, no, tell me your opinion first, and then I will agree with it!" Ruskin destroyed all my pleasure in my room at Waterloo Place which I had furnished with what I fondly hoped was sound taste. His admiration of two marble busts supporting the mantelpiece was so enthusiastic that I said: "I am so glad you like them; what do you think of my carpet? Are not the flowers beautiful?" "Flowers!" he said with a look of the deepest scorn. "Flowers! Pickled cabbage, you mean!" I never liked that carpet afterwards.'

Always ready to practise what he preached, Ruskin, in spite of warnings from his old publishers, was not to be shaken from his determination when he planned his St. George's Guild and decided that *Fors* at least must be free from the evils he was now denouncing. Taking into his confidence his old protégé and indispensable assistant, George Allen—as blissfully ignorant of the trade as was his master, but equally eager to try the experiment—he appointed him as agent and started publishing *Fors* at Heathfield Cottage, Keston, Kent, where Allen was then living with his family.

Allen's association with the author had begun some

seventeen years before when, a working carpenter and joiner, he had studied drawing under Ruskin and Rossetti at the Working Men's College, founded by F. D. Maurice in Great Ormond Street. He had previously fallen in love with the maid of Ruskin's mother, marrying her in 1856. Becoming one of Ruskin's most promising pupils, already marked for his sterling character, he was appointed assistant drawing-master. Studying engraving under Ruskin, as well as etching under Le Keux and mezzotint under Thomas Lupton, he subsequently executed for Ruskin some of his finest steel engravings. 'This orchis plate', Ruskin wrote when he saw Allen's work on 'Iris Germanica'—Plate VI in *Proserpina*—'is not only our best, but it is one of the finest things ever done on steel . . . I am delighted with it.'

Allen, like many others, came completely under Ruskin's spell. 'The Master', as he was called in Allen's circle after he became the first head of the Guild of St. George, had not only developed his protégé's latent artistic ability, but also discovered with increasing years a community of interests which bound them together for the remainder of their lives.

Ruskin was not the only one to recognize Allen's personal qualities and skill as a craftsman while he was still at the Working Men's College. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, one of his drawing masters, who knew his fine work as a joiner, had helped William Morris and other young reforming enthusiasts to form the famous but ill-starred Morris Company, with the object of giving 'real good taste at the price as far as possible of ordinary furniture', and he invited Allen to join as a partner, in

charge of the furniture department. Allen, however, declined—just as he declined the offer of a Government appointment as Superintendent of the Furnishing of the Royal Palace—in order to devote himself entirely to Ruskin's service. Thenceforward, in one capacity or another, he shared in most of Ruskin's activities, becoming one of the original Companions of the St. George's Guild and a familiar figure at all 'Ruskinian' gatherings.

Years later, referring in *Praeterita* (1885) to his two special pupils at the Working Men's College, Ruskin wrote: 'One I chose; the other chose me, or rather my mother's maid, Hannah, for love of whom he came to the College, learned drawing there under Rossetti and me—and became eventually Mr. George Allen of Sunnyside; who, I hope, still looks back to his having been an entirely honest and perfect working joiner as the foundation of his prosperity in life.' They became enthusiastic geologists together when, some nine years before they started publishing, Ruskin thought of making a home for himself in the Swiss mountains, and settled George Allen and his family close by in order that he might have his help. Allen's collection of minerals was acquired after his death by the University of Oxford.

Whatever Ruskin's interest, George Allen, in Sir E. T. Cook's words, 'assisted him with such thoroughness, sincerity and ability that when a new departure was made he was turned to as a matter of course'. Thus it was, at a week's notice, and with no previous experience of the trade, that Allen was set up as Ruskin's publisher in 1871, 'in the middle of a country field',

as one of Ruskin's trade critics expressed it at the time.

Fors Clavigera, addressed 'to the workmen and labourers of Great Britain', appeared in monthly instalments, originally published at sevenpence each. Oddly conceived as it was, and visionary in its ideas, the scheme was launched by its author in a thoroughly business-like way:

'It costs me £10 to print 1,000 copies, and £5 more to give you a picture, and a penny off my 7d. to send you the book; a thousand sixpences are £25; when you have bought a thousand *Fors* of me I shall therefore have £5 for my trouble, and my single shopman, Mr. Allen, £5 for his; we won't work for less, either of us. And I mean to sell all my large books, henceforward, in the same way; well printed, well bound, and at a fixed price; and the trade may charge a proper and acknowledged profit for their trouble in retailing the book. Then the public will know what they are about, and so will tradesmen. I, the first producer, answer, to the best of my power, for the quality of the book—paper, binding, eloquence and all; the retail dealer charges what he ought to charge, openly; and if the public do not choose to give it, they can't get the book. That is what I call legitimate business.'

The head of his old publishing firm, George Smith, though confident that Ruskin was only courting failure was ready to humour him at first to the extent of acting as agent concurrently with Allen. The Booksellers, however, frowned on a system so fantastic, so contrary to their own methods and tradition. It was idle to suggest

that they should sell *Fors* over the counter at 'a proper and acknowledged profit'—Ruskin suggested that their price should be tenpence—when anyone could get copies from his agent direct for sevenpence each, post free, and no abatement whatever was allowed to the trade. They carried the war into his own camp by boycotting his earlier works, the circulation of which, for a time, seriously declined. Well able in those days to run the financial risk of waiting for the tide to turn, Ruskin continued his experiment undismayed.

The first edition of each instalment of *Fors* consisted of 1050 copies; later editions, for the most part, of 1000. Issued in monthly parts, the price of which was raised after three years to tenpence, and subsequently bound into annual volumes, these small pamphlets were nearly all sold through the post. Copies were sent to the leading journals, 'whose editors may notice them if they choose', but even this grudging concession was stopped by Ruskin in 1874. Since he had declined from the first to advertise his wares ('You will hear of *Fors* in time—if it be worth hearing', he wrote in 1872), it was not surprising that his publishing business had to run for a year or two at a loss.

He thought seriously of selling outright to the original publishers the copyright of all his earlier works, applying his new method of publishing only to *Fors* and any subsequent books. Ruskin and George Smith, however, like most authors and publishers before and since, held views regarding the pecuniary values of their books so widely different that the plan fell through.

Towards the end of 1872 Ruskin discussed the possibility of selling the early copyrights by auction.

Another suggestion was that Bernard Quaritch, that prince of antiquarian booksellers for whom he had long entertained a high regard and from whom he bought many of his literary treasures, might take over the publication of his earlier works.

‘I am sure’, he wrote to Quaritch at the beginning of 1873, ‘there is no one who would do what should or could be done for them more energetically—but I am not sure whether I stated in my last letter one limitation which may make the whole thing unacceptable to you, namely that I retain the right to publish *myself* in my own continuous expensive edition, what portions I like of the older books. That edition of my own is to continue, in volumes priced either 9/6 or 19/— each, as I can issue them: it will include, in altered forms, much of the 3rd, 4th and 5th volumes of *Modern Painters*, some of the *Seven Lamps*, and perhaps the half of *The Stones of Venice*. For this edition of my own I shall prepare entirely new plates and woodcuts.

‘The offer I make is of the copyright of all my books published before 1870—to be issued in their present text, with no omissions or alterations, but in any form—cheap, or periodical, or what not—the publisher chooses. All the plates and woodcuts in their present state are to form a part of the purchase. I mean the whole thing—copyright and plates—to go for one round sum, and so save bother; the purchaser having, of course, the right to prepare other plates from them if he chooses. I shall interfere in nothing, except only in the one proviso that the texts are to be unaltered.

‘I never thought you were likely to care about the

thing. I was advised to put it up for auction, which indeed I have given instructions to do, not in the least knowing what would be a fair price to ask. If you can move in the matter further, I will send you proofs of the plates of *Modern Painters* in their present state . . .'

Both schemes, however, fell through, since Ruskin, upon George Allen's advice, finally decided not to sell the copyright of his earlier books, which were gradually transferred from Smith Elder to his own publisher in Kent. Smith Elder continued to print *Fors* and to issue it concurrently with Allen, and to publish Ruskin's other works, until 1873; but the author, convinced that time would vindicate his system, gradually withdrew his earlier books from their hands. The breach was regretted on both sides. Ruskin himself acknowledged in one of his later instalments of *Fors*: 'I would like very much again to be on terms with my old publisher, and hear him telling me nice stories over our walnuts this Christmas after dividing his year's spoils with me in Christmas charity'.

Ruskin, in spite of trade opposition and forecasts of failure, had no intention of yielding. 'The absolute refusal of credit or abatement is only the carrying out of a part of my general method of political economy; and I adopt this method of sale because I think authors ought not to be too proud to sell their own books, any more than painters to sell their own pictures.'

Only an author of Ruskin's genius and outstanding personality could have hoped for success along such unorthodox lines. There was always a news-value about his writings in those hectic, prolific years. His revo-

lutionary political doctrines, his Oxford road-diggers, his London tea-shop, and all the other industrial schemes connected with the St. George's Guild, combined to keep him in the limelight and to make him a law unto himself. Someone once described him as a 'great tradesman'. He certainly became an uncommonly successful one. Once the tide turned, the publishing business grew out of all knowledge. 'The public has a very long nose', he declared, 'and scents out what it wants, sooner or later.'

His trusty henchman Allen was bookseller and publisher in one, like the publisher of earlier days; and as the business expanded drew each member of his industrious family into it. In three years, with Ruskin gradually adding his earlier works to *Fors*, the business outgrew the Keston cottage, and the family and the publishing concern moved to Sunnyside, Orpington, a few miles away. Ruskin himself at first superintended many of the publishing details. 'My dear Allen,' he wrote in the early days of their venture, 'you really are a considerable goose. Of course you mustn't take booksellers' orders for less than a dozen—and they must pay their own carriage. This will leave you a shilling (and over) profit on every parcel you make up—allowing twopence for paper and string; and it's not everybody who can get a shilling for making up a parcel.'

Success, when it came, gradually transformed Allen's home in the rural seclusion of Orpington into a centre of activity as busy as the hives which shared, with his roses and cabbages (for which he received 'a mere tenpence a dozen'), the immortality of mention in Ruskin's works. Many years later the hives were to make him the

appropriate publisher of Maeterlinck's classic, *The Life of the Bee*.

Mrs. Allen herself lent a hand with the extra work on publishing days, sometimes working with her husband and the rest of the family until two in the morning at preparing copies for post to all parts of the country. On the death of his mother, whose maid she had been before her marriage, Ruskin paid a touching tribute to Mrs. Allen's lifelong devotion by giving her a ring from his mother's hand.

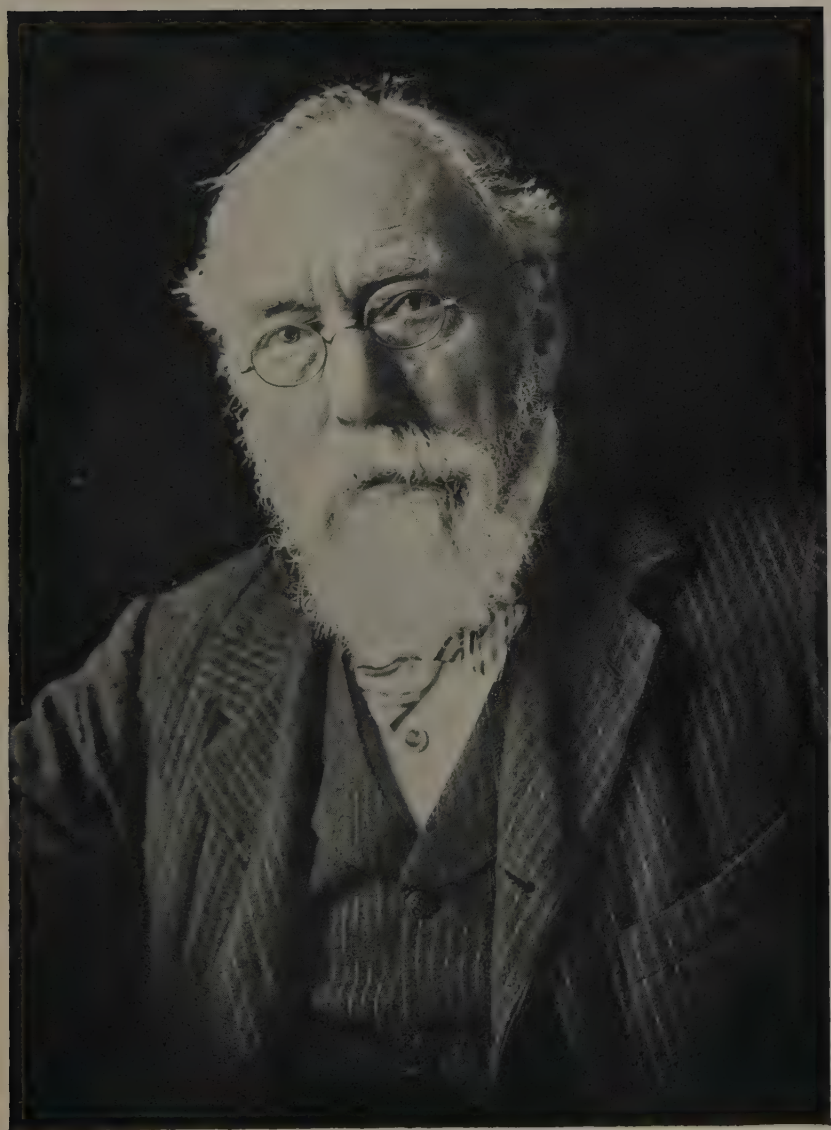
It is difficult to follow all the ramifications of the Ruskin bibliography, especially while some of the earlier works were still being issued through Smith, Elder & Co., who inaugurated the revised edition of his books while *Fors* was starting the experimental plan. The method of publication at this time is illustrated in the history of *Sesame and Lilies*, the first volume of these 'collected works', as explained in the *Life of Ruskin* by W. G. Collingwood, who had been in close connection with him for many years:

'It was issued by Smith & Elder, May, 1871, at 7s. to the trade only, leaving the retailer to fix the price to the public. In September, 1872, the work was also supplied by Mr. George Allen, and the price raised to 9s. 6d. (carriage paid) to trade and public alike, with the idea that an extra shilling, or nearly ten per cent, might be added by the bookseller for his trouble in ordering the work. If he did not add the commission that was his own affair; though with postage of order and payment, when only one or two copies at a time were asked for, this did not leave him much margin.

So it was doubled, by the simple expedient of doubling the price!—or, to be accurate, raising it to 18s. (carriage paid) for 20s. over the counter. It was freely prophesied by business men that this would not do: however, at the end of fifteen years the *sixth edition* of this work in this form was being sold, in spite of the fact that, five years before, a smaller edition of the same book had been brought out at 5s. and was then in its fourth edition of 3,000 copies each.'

Though Mudie's and some other firms sent orders, the trade as a whole remained antagonistic long after Ruskin had transferred his earlier works from Smith Elder to Orpington. George Allen had occasion in 1879 to write of a booksellers' meeting which he had attended—only to be groaned at. 'It gives me much pain to think of it', wrote Ruskin in reply. 'You have certainly had a great deal to put up with in fighting this battle—and I had no conception myself of the way my friends would fail me in it, nor of the general folly of the public. It is like beginning a battle with a *man*, and finding him change into a heap of mud. But we'll *wash* him away, if we can't *throttle* him.' This hostile attitude was the more bewildering to him since he had intended his plan, as he had pointed out in 1871, 'not in hostility to booksellers but, as I think they will find eventually, with a just regard to their interest.'

For booksellers individually and as a whole he always had a soft spot. Some of his friendliest letters were to such great figures of the trade as Bernard Quaritch and F. S. Ellis, with both of whom, as a buyer of costly books, he had dealings for many years. Never



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GEORGE ALLEN 1837-1907

satisfied to treat such matters in a dry business manner his letters to booksellers, printers and engravers alike were always couched in the most cordial terms. 'The human relationship was what he sought everywhere', as Sir E. T. Cook writes in his introduction to the correspondence; 'everyone who served him in any business capacity had to be his friend, and this was especially true of those who were concerned with books. For books were to him, as to Milton, "not absolutely dead things", but "kings and statesmen lingering patiently, not to grant audience but to gain it"; and the bookseller was thus a court-chamberlain, whose private ear it was a privilege to have.'

This is illustrated in a letter of February 1882 to Bernard Quaritch; referring to the bookseller's new catalogue Ruskin expresses his 'astonishment as much by your quick attention to the minutest detail as Tintoret by his painter's brush. How you can do it or get it done is a mere miracle to me. One of your catalogues has as much in it as two of my works! And it takes me a year to *look* at what you print in a fortnight.'

Quaritch seized the occasion, in acknowledging Ruskin's tribute, to reveal the secret of his hard-won success. 'Nature', he wrote, 'has blessed me with exceptional vigour; this gift I have concentrated upon my trade. Love of knowledge has aided me in my business; love of order has ensured my commercial success; love of truth has secured me the patronage of such men as you, the late and the present Earls of Crawford, of Mr. Gladstone, and of the late Earl of Beaconsfield and others. Just treatment and fair wages have enabled me to surround myself with a good staff

of assistants. I have been forty years in London, and have never been a day absent from duties; when I have been ill, I have gone to my work all the same.'

It took Ruskin rather more than ten years to win his battle with the trade, the first overture coming from the booksellers themselves in 1882. Part of the peace terms was an agreement to fix the price at which a book could be sold over the counter, giving the booksellers a fixed discount, instead of, as in Ruskin's original plan, selling to the trade at a fixed price and leaving them to add whatever price they liked before selling the book again to the public.

'Thus', writes Cook in his introduction to the Standard Edition of *Fors*, 'there was one uniform price, say 6/-, at which customers everywhere could obtain the book. The discount given to the trade was not large enough to allow the booksellers to undercut each other, by offering the book at 5/- or 4/6, but was sufficient to leave them a "living wage" for the cost and trouble of retailing.'

'I consider our victory virtually won', wrote Ruskin to Allen at the time, 'when offers of peace come from the other side, and I find in history the absolute refusal of concession in pursuit of ultimate objects almost always ends in total defeat—e.g. the most terrific of examples, Friedrich at Kunersdorf. And I do think that the plan of allowing booksellers to sell the stitched sheets and show our own binding would be really serviceable to us. Without abandoning any of my own principles one jot, I quite see that the kind of people who are fast covering up the country between you and me with villas ten yards cube, set between

gardens back and front of ten yards square, can't buy our blue books, but ought to have the offer of *something*.'

A compromise was reached in this last connection by means of which the books themselves, hitherto produced with deliberate disregard of cost, were printed at less exclusive prices. It had been part of Ruskin's creed to protest against what he called the 'plague of cheap literature'. No book, he maintained in his *Political Economy of Art* in 1857, 'is ever worth half so much to its reader as one that has been coveted for a year at a bookstall, and bought out of saved half-pence; and perhaps a day or two's fasting'. While valuable books should be within everyone's reach, he subsequently wrote in *Sesame and Lilies*, they should be 'printed in excellent form, for a just price; but not in any vile, vulgar, or, by reason of smallness of type, physically injurious form, at a vile price. . . .'

'What do we, as a nation, care about books?' he exclaims elsewhere, in words almost as true today as when they were written so long ago. 'How much do you think we spend altogether on our libraries, public or private, as compared with what we spend on our horses?'—today, of course, the comparison would be motor-cars. . . . How, he asks, would the nation's expenditure on literature compare with its expenditure on luxurious eating and drinking? 'If public libraries were half as costly as public dinners, or books cost the tenth part of what bracelets do, even foolish men and women might sometimes suspect there was some good in reading, as well as in munching and sparkling; whereas the very cheapness of literature is making even wise people forget that if a book is worth reading it is worth

buying . . . We call ourselves a rich nation, and we are filthy and foolish enough to thumb each other's books out of circulating libraries.'

Having praised men who had pinched their stomachs and bared their backs to buy the books they craved, he had no patience with the poor Glasgow clerk who wrote lamenting that Ruskin's books, highly as he appreciated them, were beyond his means. 'I by no means shut my eyes to the anomalies of the Book-selling Trade,' he had written to Ruskin, 'but I can't see that it can be remedied by an author becoming his own Bookseller, and, at the same time, putting an unusually high price on his books. . . . Here am I, possessed of a passionate love of nature in all her aspects, cooped up in this fearfully crammed mass of population, with its filthy Clyde, which would naturally be a noble river, but under the curse of our much belauded civilisation, forsooth, turned into an almost stagnant, loathsome ditch . . . ' and so on, in terms plainly echoing the master's teaching, until he pointed out that however much he wished to foster his taste for the beautiful in nature and art he could not afford Ruskin's books.

Ruskin had compared the price of his collected works to a doctor's fee of half a guinea, which his impecunious Glasgow correspondent found absurd, for the poor could not and did not pay such fees. 'I know that,' growled Ruskin, 'and I don't want any poor people to read my books. I said so long ago, in *Sesame*. I want them to read these letters, which they can get, each for the price of two pots of beer; and not to read my large books, nor anybody else's, till they are rich

enough, at least, to pay for good printing and binding. Even oracular Mr. Grant Duff* says they are all to be rich first, and only next to be intelligent; and I am happy in supposing it needs a great deal of intelligence to read *Modern Painters*.'

In publishing the Glasgow letters, Ruskin, with characteristic annotations, declared that he was not in the least minded to prescribe his books to his correspondent: 'If a child in a muddy ditch asked me for a picture-book, I should not give it him, but say, "Come out of that first; or, if you cannot, I must go and get help; but picture-books, there, you shall have none".'

And yet, when he wrote Letter 89 of *Fors*, in August 1880, addressed 'To the Trades Unions of England', and devoted to the special interests of the working men, he presented 525 free copies to different branches with offers of further parcels gratis for distribution in any quantities among their members. In time, too, as shown in his letter to George Allen when the compromise was reached with the booksellers, he had to admit that his high prices prevented his writings from reaching many of the people whose interests he had most at heart. With the settlement of his trade dispute and the reduction of prices his sales increased enormously. 'The publisher lived and throve', to quote Sir E. T. Cook, 'and the author received from his books a steady income, far in excess of his former receipts, and probably larger than that of any other didactic writer of his time.'

It was well for Ruskin that his experiment had suc-

* Referring to a speech which had just been made by the then Under Secretary of State for India.

ceeded. Having, through countless acts of generosity, scattered the fortune of £200,000 which he inherited from his parents, he was now coming to depend more and more for his income on the sale of his books. Happily his profits from this source never failed him, averaging an annual income of some £4,000 during the last fifteen years of his life.

Although, as we have seen, he had taken the keenest interest in the actual running of the business in its early years, he was more than content to hand over the details to Allen after the unhappy spring of 1878—three years after the death of Rose La Touche—when, unable to bear any longer the ceaseless mental and emotional strain of the past decade, he suffered a temporary breakdown. It was on his recovery from this spell of insanity that he sent Allen one of the most moving tributes that any publisher ever received from an author:

‘Dear Allen,—How good and kind you are, and have always been. I trust, whatever happens to me, that your position with the copyright of my books, if anybody cares for them, and the friends gained by your honesty and industry, is secure on your little piece of Kentish home territory. I write this letter to release you from all debt to me of any kind, and to leave you, with my solemn thanks for all the energy and faith of your life, given to me so loyally, in all that I have ever tried to do for good, to do now what is best for your family and yourself.

‘As I look back on my life in this closing time I find myself in debt, to every friend that loved me, for what

a score of lives could not repay; and would fain say to them all, as to you, words of humiliation which I check only because they are so vain.

‘Ever (Nay—in such a time as this what “ever” is there except “today”?—) once more your thankful and sorrowful friend—Master no more—J. Ruskin.’

Ruskin had undoubtedly exhausted himself through overwork. ‘As I see what he has done,’ wrote his old friend, Sir John Simon, F.R.S., President of the Royal College of Surgeons, to Professor Norton, ‘I wonder he has not broken down long ago.’ Later on, however, after spending the next few years in comparative retirement at Brantwood, he was able to take up *Fors* again. For a time he even resumed his post at Oxford and, in spite of returning brainstorms, fought bravely through the ’eighties against despair. ‘You ought not to be so anxious during these monsoons and cyclones of my poor old plagued brain’, he wrote to Norton. ‘They clear off, and leave me, to say the least, as wise as I was before.’

Many of the literary plans, as well as his other multifarious undertakings, had to be modified, but he struggled with new volumes as well as with new editions of such of his old works as he had not placed on the condemned list. He was spared as much work as possible, inevitable details fretting his troubled mind, as may be seen in this whimsical protest to Allen from Brantwood in 1884:

‘I do extremely wonder what you think my brains are made of. Catgut?—or Caoutchouc?—or macaroni?—or glass bottles that can be blown to balloons? I’ve

just thirteen different "Works" on hand just now—and any *one* too much for me. But send the Index and I'll see what's to be done.'

Ruskin's shattered health naturally added considerably to his publisher's difficulties. The thirteen books on hand, to which this letter referred, were none of them straightforward like the works of other authors. Old and new, they were appearing or reappearing in parts at irregular intervals, a method which, as Allen once pointed out to E. T. Cook, called for quite as much method on the publisher's part as versatility on the author's.

George Allen's own remuneration at first had been simply payment on commission, but at the end of 1886 a fresh agreement was made which brought him proportionate profits. By that time a publishing shed had been added to Allen's pleasant garden behind his house. 'If the science of architecture consists in the adjustment of means to an end,' wrote Cook in the following year,* 'Mr. Ruskin's publisher has lit his author's lamps to some purpose, for a neater and better-kept warehouse you will not easily find. There are sixty-three different works (or editions) of Mr. Ruskin's in stock, most of them in various styles of binding. To keep all these in due place, so as to execute orders for one here and there every day, in what is hardly more than a garden outhouse, requires considerable skill.'

The new edition of *Modern Painters* was probably the most formidable task that fell to Allen's lot before he crowned his career with his monumental edition

* *Studies in Ruskin.*

of all Ruskin's works. In six heavy volumes, *Modern Painters* was one of the most lavishly illustrated surveys ever published, and proved a stern test of the rural publishing system. Though it taxed Allen's household to the uttermost the task was so successfully accomplished that Ruskin's profits from this issue alone amounted to something like £7,000.

Yet Ruskin, only a few years before, had been so dissatisfied with some of the old plates that he had asked Allen to burn thousands of them in the back garden, vowing that he would never republish the work; so it was stated in *The Athenaeum* on the occasion of George Allen's death. According to the same authority, Ruskin, before this, had all but given away the whole of the *Modern Painters* steel plates to a friend, who would have taken them to the United States and produced the book there. America had a great and growing Ruskin following which at that time lived on pirated editions whose publishers even tried sometimes to introduce them over here. Happily George Allen had saved Ruskin from a costly mistake on each of the occasions referred to. He made himself responsible for all the re-touching, and re-engraving where necessary, for this edition of *Modern Painters* and also undertook the engraving for nearly all of Ruskin's later books, from the Oxford lectures onwards. In this work he was assisted by his second son, Hugh, the eldest son and daughter being chiefly concerned with the details of publishing. Miss Grace Allen, who compiled the *Ruskin Birthday Book*, also assisted as proof-reader and later relieved her father of this work. Small wonder that Ruskin, in the 1880 edition of *The Seven Lamps of*

Architecture, referred to the Allens as distinctly 'a helpful family'.

Carlyle, Ruskin's mentor, who was full of praise for *Fors* when the first letters appeared in 1871—though dubious, as he wrote to Emerson, of 'the way Ruskin has towards the bibliopolic world'—visited this Arcadian publishing house on one occasion while staying at Lord Derby's place at Keston. 'He wanted particularly to know', said Allen in relating the incident to Cook, 'whether we didn't keep "a coo". Visitors', added the publisher, 'seldom understand that we can have any work to do. The greatest sceptic of all is Mr. Ruskin himself. When he was staying with us last year we tried to get him to come and help; but he was quite frightened at the parcels, and refused to believe that anybody really wanted to buy his books. We must take him for walks, he said, and so off the girls went with him to the flowers and the woods.'

That was in the 'eighties, when Ruskin, subject to the brainstorms which clouded his closing years, was too obviously becoming a spent force. In the lucid intervals which followed, although, as Ruskin himself declared, he found no more joy in exertion after Rose's death, he followed *Fors* with several volumes of lectures and the autobiographical *Praeterita*, besides continuing to revise his earlier works. George Allen helped with suggestions for these, as well as for cheaper editions of some of the older books. Ruskin assented, without however reading proofs or transacting any business in connection with them, the editorial work now being entrusted either to W. G. Collingwood or Alexander Wedderburn, K.C. Meantime, all his works, old and

new, maintained a remarkably steady sale. 'I'm afraid the public take more interest in my books than I do myself', he confessed in these later years to a friend.

He had especial reason for gratitude now in having a man of George Allen's all-round abilities and unswerving devotion to safeguard his publishing interests. His correspondence bears witness to this, as well as to his sincere affection for one who had long since become his friend as well as his publisher. During one of his happier intervals, at the beginning of 1888, mindful of this indebtedness, he wrote to Allen:

'I have, indeed, much to thank you for, in the past and in many past years, and am very thankful that you are so well yourself after the anxieties I have caused you in this one. It is a very great relief to my mind at present to know that the various reports about me have not interfered with your business.'

The business itself grew so steadily, indeed, that Allen found it necessary to open a London warehouse at 8, Bell Yard, Temple Bar, and later, having undertaken publishing for other authors as well, to establish offices at Ruskin House, 156, Charing Cross Road. By 1893, seven years before Ruskin's death, the publisher had acquired a considerable list of books by other writers. Although Ruskin's works were still the mainstay of the business, the loss of the Master's dominating personality, and the fact that the copyright of his earlier works was within measurable distance of its end, made it advisable to develop on more conventional lines. It was useless to approach fresh authors under any other conditions.

Among the early additions to the new list were works by that prolific and, in his day, extremely popular author, Augustus J. C. Hare, including his illustrated guides to France, published in the early 'nineties, and the six volumes of his autobiography, *The Story of My Life*,* issued between 1896 and 1900. Rich in experience of art productions through Ruskin's works the firm, presently known as George Allen & Sons, specialized in art editions. Among these were *Pride and Prejudice* and *Peg Woffington*, both illustrated by Hugh Thomson, and a handsome edition of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, illustrated by Walter Crane, who also designed the firm's well-known colophon.

In 1897 began the long association with another eminent author who, like Ruskin, was a man with a message—Maurice Maeterlinck. With *The Treasure of the Humble*, his first volume of essays, issued in its English translation 1896, and *The Life of the Bee*, which followed in 1901, the fame of Maeterlinck, hitherto largely local, became universal, and, in this country, deeply rooted. *The Life of the Bee*, a special joy to its English publisher, whose love of bee-keeping has been mentioned earlier, has since attained a circulation of about two hundred thousand in its several English editions. *Wisdom and Destiny*, another of Maeterlinck's early books, and *The Treasure of the Humble*, have run to fifty or sixty thousand copies. Most of his later works, including essays and plays, were also translated and are still published at Ruskin House.

* Recently reissued in a two-volume, abridged edition, edited by Malcolm Barnes. (Allen & Unwin, 1952-53.)

Other additions to the list included Mr. Hilaire Belloc's *Path to Rome*, published in 1902 and now in its eighth edition; and books by Andrew Lang, Sir Herbert Maxwell and Professor Gilbert Murray, whose first work, *Andromache: A Play in Three Acts*, appeared in 1900, and has been followed under the same imprint by his equally distinguished translations from the dramas of Euripides, Sophocles, Aeschylus and Aristophanes.

At the turn of the century, however, Ruskin's books were still to the fore, the chief concern of George Allen's later years being the sumptuous Library Edition, edited jointly by Alexander Wedderburn, K.C., one of Ruskin's executors, and Sir E. T. Cook, who had been successively editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Westminster Gazette* and the *Daily News*. This magnificent series of thirty-nine volumes, the only complete, authoritative and annotated edition in existence, beautifully printed on special paper bearing the water-mark of Ruskin's seal and monogram, and including 270 hitherto unpublished drawings by Ruskin himself, was the publisher's last tribute to his Master's memory. Though he did not witness its completion, he lived long enough to see the last volume in preparation. Sir E. T. Cook crowned his editorial work on the Library Edition with his two-volume *Life of John Ruskin*, which appeared in 1911.

George Allen died in the autumn of 1907, in his seventy-sixth year, some six months after his wife and seven years after Ruskin. Earlier that year he had been obliged to wage another war, this time with various publishers of popular reprints who, taking every ad-

vantage of the lapse of copyright in Ruskin's first works, were flooding the market with cheap and, in his view, entirely unworthy editions. The correspondence which ensued and the controversial articles in the *Saturday Review* provoked by Ruskinian devotees, were afterwards published by George Allen under the title, *Copyright and Copy-wrong: The Authentic and Unauthentic Ruskin*. The matter was even mentioned in the House of Commons, Mr. Lloyd George, then First Lord of the Treasury, promising that 'the question of finding a remedy for this evil'—the reprinting of 'misleading and obsolete editions of important ethical and scientific works such as those of Ruskin and Darwin'—should not be overlooked when an opportunity occurred for introducing new copyright legislation.

George Allen countered the competition with cheap editions of his own, but the damage done was irretrievable. It was urged in defence of the unauthorized reprints that they would spread Ruskin's fame and teaching so widely that his own publishers would, in the end, have no cause to regret the need for producing their own cheap editions to meet the increased demand. Ruskin, however, was no longer such a name to conjure with as in the past. There was no room for a multitude of new editions. It was a losing battle this time, though no effort was spared to make the remaining volumes of the Standard Edition as worthy of the master as were their predecessors.

George Allen was succeeded by his sons, William and Hugh, and by his daughter, Grace, all of whom had been assisting their father for many years. Hugh was the younger son whose drawings and engravings drew

generous tributes to his father from the Sage at Brantwood. The Standard Edition bears witness to his skill in both fields, besides furnishing abundant proof of the masterly work of George Allen himself.

Two years after the father's death his successors purchased the London publishing branch of Bemrose & Sons of Derby. Founded by William Bemrose chiefly as a printing business in the Market Place, Derby, in 1826, it is the oldest of the firms associated with the amalgamation at Ruskin House. Bemrose did little publishing until the middle of the nineteenth century, save in the way of pamphlets, or small, unbound books on matters of local or county interest. Later, however, when the founder's sons, Henry Howe Bemrose and William Bemrose, were taken into the business, and the firm became known as Bemrose & Sons, London and Derby, they launched out in more ambitious publishing ventures, not only printing and binding their own books but also making their own plates and illustrations. Some of the works were also written by one or other of the partners themselves. William Bemrose, Jun., was the author of a popular *Manual of Wood Carving*, which ran through many editions and was the forerunner of other successful handbooks on the applied arts. Among his later undertakings were his *Life and Works of Joseph Wright* (Wright of Derby), and a monograph on porcelain.

Another of their publications in the early 'sixties was the Chorale Book, edited by Henry Bemrose, a selection of nearly 200 Psalms and hymns, several of his own composition. Henry's love of music, as was pointed out in the centenary history of *The House of Bemrose, 1826-*

1926, was also shown in the Chant Book which he compiled in collaboration with W. Adlington. In July 1860, the firm published the first number of *The Reliquary: a Depository for Precious Relics—Legendary, Biographical and Historical*, edited by Llewellyn Jewitt, then editing the *Derby Telegraph*. Issued quarterly, and devoted more particularly to the bygone history of Derbyshire, it soon established itself, in the words of one of its admirers, as 'the best local archaeological periodical that has yet appeared'. *The Reliquary* remained under Jewitt's accomplished editorship until his death in 1886. It was continued under the editorship of the Rev. J. C. Cox and others until 1894, when it became known as *The Reliquary and Illustrated Archaeologist*. Like many other learned periodicals, however, it died during the Great War.

In the main the publications of Bemrose & Sons were utilitarian, including many well-known educational and children's books, magazines, and guides. The *Derbyshire Red Book* was a familiar almanack and annual register which the publishers issued for more than half a century. Important commercial and technical works included the *Balance Time Interest Tables*—still a standard book in constant use—various Railway Rate Books, Commercial Ready Reckoners, and Nickels' famous *Coal Tar Tree Chart*, all of which retained an influential place in the commercial world. The Church Registers and forms continued for many years to be widely used. The production of The Church Congress Report was taken over in 1882 and continued until 1912.

Among their many substantial contributions to art

and archaeology the best known, perhaps, are the *History of Old English Porcelain*, *Ceramics of Swansea and Nantgarw*, L. M. Solon's *Art of the Old English Potter*, *Values of Old English Silver and Sheffield Plate*, and *The Memorials of the Counties of England*; but these, for the most part, are now out of print, though still in occasional demand.

Bemrose & Sons maintained a London publishing house from 1865, first at 21, Paternoster Row, then in Paternoster Buildings and finally in Old Bailey until July 1909, when, deciding to concentrate their energies and plant on the further development of their printing contracts in Derby, they sold their London publishing concern to George Allen & Sons.

At the same time George Allen & Sons moved from their costly home in Charing Cross Road to 44 and 45 Rathbone Place, Oxford Street. In 1911 they amalgamated with Swan Sonnenschein & Co., when a new company was formed under the style of George Allen & Co. Ltd. In 1913, however, George Allen & Co. encountered financial difficulties, and for a short time the business was conducted by a Receiver for the Debenture Holders.

Just as the revival of the House of Routledge at the beginning of the century was mainly due to the ripe experience and shrewdness of William Swan Sonnenschein, so the crisis in the affairs of George Allen & Company produced the very man to save the situation: Stanley Unwin, who was one day to be described by Mr. J. G. Wilson at a trade gathering as 'the most representative publisher of English books in the world'.

A son of Edward Unwin—one of the two brothers who made famous the printing business of Unwin Brothers founded by their father Jacob Unwin—he was born in 1884 with, as the saying goes, printer's ink in his veins. The Unwin family, in its scattered branches, includes distinguished names in many other fields besides those of letters. The list given in *Unwiniana* (1937), compiled like the early book of *Notes* on the same subject for the family committee, of which Sir Stanley Unwin is himself a member, mentions among others Captain Edward Unwin, V.C., of Gallipoli fame, Professor William Cawthorne Unwin, President of the Institution of Civil Engineers, who died in 1933; Sarah Ann Unwin (Lady Byles), Dame of the British Empire, who died in the same year after a life crowded with public service in many directions; and Sir Raymond Unwin, the eminent architect and town planner.

Like the late T. Fisher Unwin, Professor W. Cawthorne Unwin and Lady Byles, the head of Allen & Unwin is a Coggeshall Unwin, whose leading progenitor was the Rev. Thomas Unwin, Vicar of Belchamp St. Paul, Essex (1643–1703).

Educated at Abbotsholme and Haubinda, Sir Stanley Unwin began his career in a very different sphere from that in which he was destined to flourish. In one of his lectures he referred to his office-boy days in the shipping and insurance trade, when he earned what he described as the magnificent sum of ten shillings a week for more than sixty hours' work. His natural bent, however, was towards the printed page. T. Fisher Unwin, who made his mark with the Pseudonym Library and other pioneer

ventures which brought many budding novelists into his list, was his step-uncle. It was in Fisher Unwin's office that he began his own publishing career, thoroughly mastering every branch of the business, and in eight busy years playing no small part in lifting a struggling young firm into the forefront of the trade. He also gained invaluable first-hand experience, in Germany, of the most efficiently organized book-trade in the world—serving as a volunteer in a retail bookshop in Leipzig, besides securing for his uncle's house, among other profitable assets, the English rights in Baedeker's Guides, now appropriately held by his own firm.

One day Sir Stanley Unwin will tell the story of those early years, not only in London but abroad, and it will be a story worth reading. The first chapter in his career closed when he realized that Fisher Unwin's firm offered insufficient scope for his ambitions and insatiable energy. Before launching out on his own, however, he prepared the way by exploring the chief book markets overseas. An account of his travels appeared twenty years later in *Two Young Men See The World*, in which he collaborated with Mr. Severn Storr, reprinting the letters they sent home during their journey.

The travellers returned in December 1913. At this moment the crisis in the affairs of George Allen & Co. gave Stanley Unwin the opportunity for which he was so singularly well equipped. A true citizen of the world, with a wide knowledge of European languages and literature and an international outlook always abreast of if not in advance of his time, he knew the value and the possibilities of the stock carried by the amalgamated

companies better than most men, and with his genius for detail and his financial acumen he restored their fortunes within two years.

The change came when the entire assets of George Allen & Co. were sold to a new company formed by Stanley Unwin, E. L. Skinner and his co-directors on the old company, under the style of George Allen & Unwin Ltd. Mr. Skinner had joined George Allen & Co. after their amalgamation with Swan Sonnenschein & Co., having invested capital in the amalgamated firm. Save during his war service he remained an active director of the reconstructed Ruskin House until 1934, when he concentrated his publishing activities in Williams and Norgate. That old-established business, in which Swan Sonnenschein had spent his 'prentice days many years before, had been acquired by Allen & Unwin in 1928, but it regained, temporarily, its independent existence in Great Russell Street under Mr. Skinner's leadership.

The reconstruction of Ruskin House—to return to our main narrative—could not have occurred at a more momentous time. The new company was actually formed on the fateful day of August 4, 1914. Not many men could have saved it through the catastrophic years which followed, when publishing, like every other peaceful profession, found itself handicapped with ever-increasing odds. The difficulties of the task were heavily weighted in Unwin's case by voluntary duties with the V.A.D. detachment founded by Sir James Cantlie, manned only by those exempt from active service on medical or other sufficient grounds. The activities of that detachment have been recorded in *The Work of*

V.A.D. London I during the War, a book which Sir Stanley edited in 1920.

His best known work, *The Truth About Publishing*, which has gone through many editions, has done more than anything to clear an atmosphere too often charged with mystery and misrepresentation. Publishing will always remain a calling more speculative and difficult, and at the same time more engrossing, than any purely commercial pursuit: with temperamental and disappointed authors predisposed to believe the worst of their publishers; with publishers disgruntled by avaricious authors or their agents; with one and all more or less dependent on the vagaries of that unknown quantity, Public Taste.

All that the layman need know about the actual production of books was summed up by Sir Stanley in *The Book in the Making*, originally delivered as a lecture to a trade gathering at Stationers' Hall. Among the literary results of his study of publishing conditions in the leading European centres are his brochures on *Book Trade Organization in Norway and Sweden* and *The Danish Book Trade Organization*, the latter following his close investigation into the work of the Danske Boghandlerforening in 1937 while guest of honour at the centenary celebrations of the book trade in Copenhagen. His cosmopolitan knowledge made him the ideal President of the International Publishers Association as well as President of the Publishers Association of Great Britain in 1933-35.

It is an old grievance that English publishers have little official honour in their own country, but Sir Stanley is an exception, having been made an LL.D. of Aberdeen University in 1945 and having been knighted

in 1946. For his international services he has been awarded the *Palme d'Officier de l'Académie Française*; the Palm in Gold of the Order of the Crown of Belgium; and the Order of the White Lion (Officer) from the Czechoslovak Government, this last having been conferred towards the end of 1937 'for his services to Czechoslovak literature and to scholars, scientists and authors from that country on English soil'. More recently he was made an 'Officer in the Order of Orange Nassau' by Her Majesty Queen Juliana and Icelandic Knight of the Order of The Falcon.

On the formation of the present company in 1914 Ruskin House was moved to 40, Museum Street, where its later history will be traced, it is to be hoped, by Sir Stanley himself. Continuity with the past was until 1947 personified in Spencer Swan Stallybrass, who was a cousin of the founder of Swan Sonnenschein & Co., and had been with that firm almost since its inception. His sixty-five-year record was nearly equalled by that of James James, formerly head of the trade counter, another old Swan Sonnenschein man whose unbroken term of service extended over fifty years. Mention should also be made of the long service of George Speed, who joined the house of George Allen in 1893 and retired from Ruskin House after nearly fifty-five years.

Today the headquarters of Allen & Unwin, as they stretch from the old offices in Museum Street to the new building in Little Russell Street, bear witness not only to the busy and prosperous years which have followed under Sir Stanley Unwin's leadership, but also to the enduring foundations upon which Ruskin House now rests.

Appendix

A NOTE may be added here concerning the Swarthmore Press which Allen & Unwin took over in 1920, thereby bringing a Quaker element into the diverse group already amalgamated at Ruskin House. Although its imprint had been in existence only some six years, its roots were buried in the publishing department of Headley Brothers, of Bishopsgate, who were at one time booksellers, printers and publishers as well. Headley Brothers, now concentrated as printers, bookbinders and stationers at the Invicta Press, Ashford, Kent, were chiefly known as publishers by the books and magazines which they issued for the Society of Friends, though they also issued works of a more general character, including the Social Service Series and the Chalfont Library. They had published the annual Swarthmore Lectures since the inception of that series in 1908 by Dr. Rufus Jones with *Quakerism: A Religion of Life*. Many other distinguished scholars among the Friends have since contributed to the series.

The Swarthmore Press was the first to issue the publication of the Selly Oak Colleges, the centre of study and fellowship near Birmingham which originated in Woodbrooke, the oldest college in the group. Woodbrooke had been for a time the family home of the late George Cadbury and was presented by him in 1903 to inaugurate the scheme with which John Wilhelm

Rowntree and other members of the Society of Friends were associated. This scheme had for its object the establishment of a 'permanent settlement for religious and social study' in order to meet the need for a centre of preparation for the Quaker ministry and service. Though mainly intended for members of the Society of Friends, Woodbrooke offers a welcome to all students, whether Friends or not, and has admitted men and women, old and young, of many nationalities, the international character of its community being one of the features of its college life.

The success of Woodbrooke led to the foundation of four other colleges, Kingsmead, Westhill, Fircroft and Carey, with similar facilities in most of them for students representative of all the Free Churches. Fircroft was founded in 1909 as a college for working men, recruiting most of its students from the industrial workers of the towns. Ten years later the Selly Oak Colleges came into being as a definite association, the controlling body of each college—hitherto developed on individual lines—establishing a Central Council for the furtherance of common purposes.

The Swarthmore Press, formed in 1914 by Mr. Philip Burt when he purchased the stock and goodwill of Headley Brothers' publishing department, was named after the famous Elizabethan manor-house in Lancashire, Swarthmore Hall, which under Margaret Fell and the founder of the Society of Friends, George Fox, had been one of the 'altar fires' of Quakerism in the seventeenth century.

The manager of the Swarthmore Press Ltd. was Mr. Philip Burt's brother-in-law, Mr. Samuel Graveson,

who had previously held an interest in the Headley business as partner and manager. He remained as manager of the new company until 1920. Up to that date the Swarthmore Press had continued the publication of *The Friend*, the weekly journal of the Society of Friends, and also of *The Venturer*, a monthly journal sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation during the War. Although for upwards of two hundred and fifty years Quakers have maintained their 'testimony against all war' as contrary to the spirit and teaching of the Gospel of Christ, the Peace publications of the Swarthmore Press brought them into conflict with the Censor and Public Prosecutor on more than one occasion during the War of 1914-18. For some weeks *The Friend* was prohibited from circulation abroad, and later the publication of the experiences of a conscientious objector who was subsequently elected M.P., resulted in the prosecution of the editor and publisher of *The Venturer* and the infliction of a heavy fine.

There was trouble, too, over a novel which they published by Harold Begbie, *Mr. Sterling Sticks it Out*. Though the author himself did good service in the Allied cause during the War, and his verses 'Fall In!' were placarded all over the country in the recruiting campaign and sung at the music-halls, he hated war and injustice and believed profoundly in the Christlike virtues. *Mr. Sterling Sticks it Out* was his protest against what he considered the unjustifiable rigour with which many of the Quakers and Tolstoyans were being treated by the authorities. The hero was a Quaker conscientious objector who, in the end, died from the effects of imprisonment: a moving story, whatever the reader's

views may be on the principle involved. It appeared with a preface in which Harold Begbie gave in full the correspondence which passed between himself and the Press Bureau regarding the publication of the novel.

The most noteworthy publications of the early days of the Swarthmore Press included two books by Ramsay MacDonald. One of these, *The Government of India* (1919), was an admirably impartial review, praised at the time in Conservative quarters as 'a valuable corrective to the undiluted nonsense' then being talked in Parliament by speakers less familiar with Indian realities. This book was written after Ramsay MacDonald's second visit to India, when at the request of Lord Morley he had served as a member of the Royal Commission set up by the Asquith Government to inquire into the Indian Civil Service. The other book was a cheap edition of *Margaret Ethel MacDonald*, that brief but impressive memoir which has since been many times reprinted and remains today in Allen & Unwin's list: a noble tribute to the wife who was one of the great inspiring influences of his life.

Other books on religion and economics by well-known writers, as well as an annual volume, *The Illustrated Year*, compiled by Graveson, were published by the Swarthmore Press before it was transferred to Ruskin House, where Burt continued as Stanley Unwin's co-director until his death in June 1931.

Other predecessors of George Allen & Unwin whose publications are now wholly or partially represented in their collective list include the Irish house of Maunsell & Co., who will be remembered for their brave attempt

to revive the glories of Dublin as a literary centre in the early years of the present century. From them Allen & Unwin inherited the works of J. M. Synge—one of the few authors of his generation of whom it may be confidently said that his work will live. Synge was closely associated with Lady Gregory and W. B. Yeats in the Irish dramatic movement which led to the foundation of the Abbey Theatre in 1904, and Maunsel & Co. published many of the plays produced there. The complete works of Synge continue their steady circulation under Allen & Unwin's imprint, *The Playboy of the Western World*, many times reprinted, remaining the chief favourite, particularly in its pocket edition. Many of St. John Ervine's plays, originally published by Maunsel, were also taken over by Allen & Unwin, who have likewise published nearly all his later works.

Then there were other firms such as Max Goschen Ltd., which brought them a book by James Elroy Flecker, *The King of Alsander*, Stephen Swift & Co. Ltd., and finally Howard Latimer Ltd., a company with offices in Great Queen Street, Kingsway, the directors being J. C. (later Sir J. C.) Squire, A. H. Hannay and G. L. Cruickshank. They issued a number of notable works before the war threw its crushing burden on the book trade. When the company went into voluntary liquidation in the autumn of 1915 Allen & Unwin took over some of their books, including three by Squire—*The Three Hills and Other Poems*, *Steps to Parnassus: and other Parodies and Diversions*, and *The Survival of the Fittest and other Poems*. With these were books by Strindberg, Jules Romains and Benedetto Croce—including his *Historical Materi-*

alism and the Economics of Karl Marx, a series of essays seeking to make clear by philosophical criticism the real aims and value of Marx's *Capital*. The connection with the famous Italian philosopher was one that Allen & Unwin continued until his death.

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